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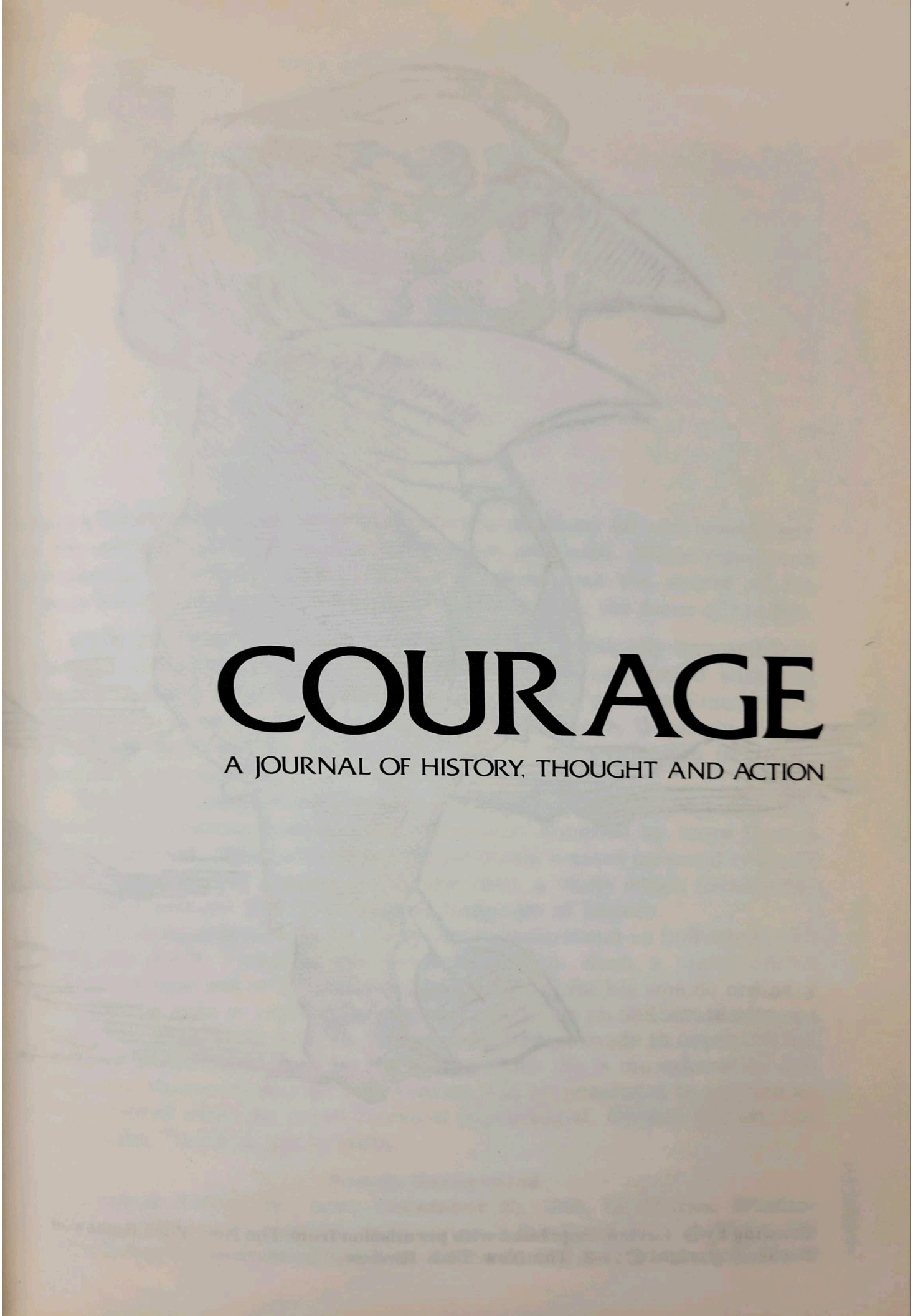
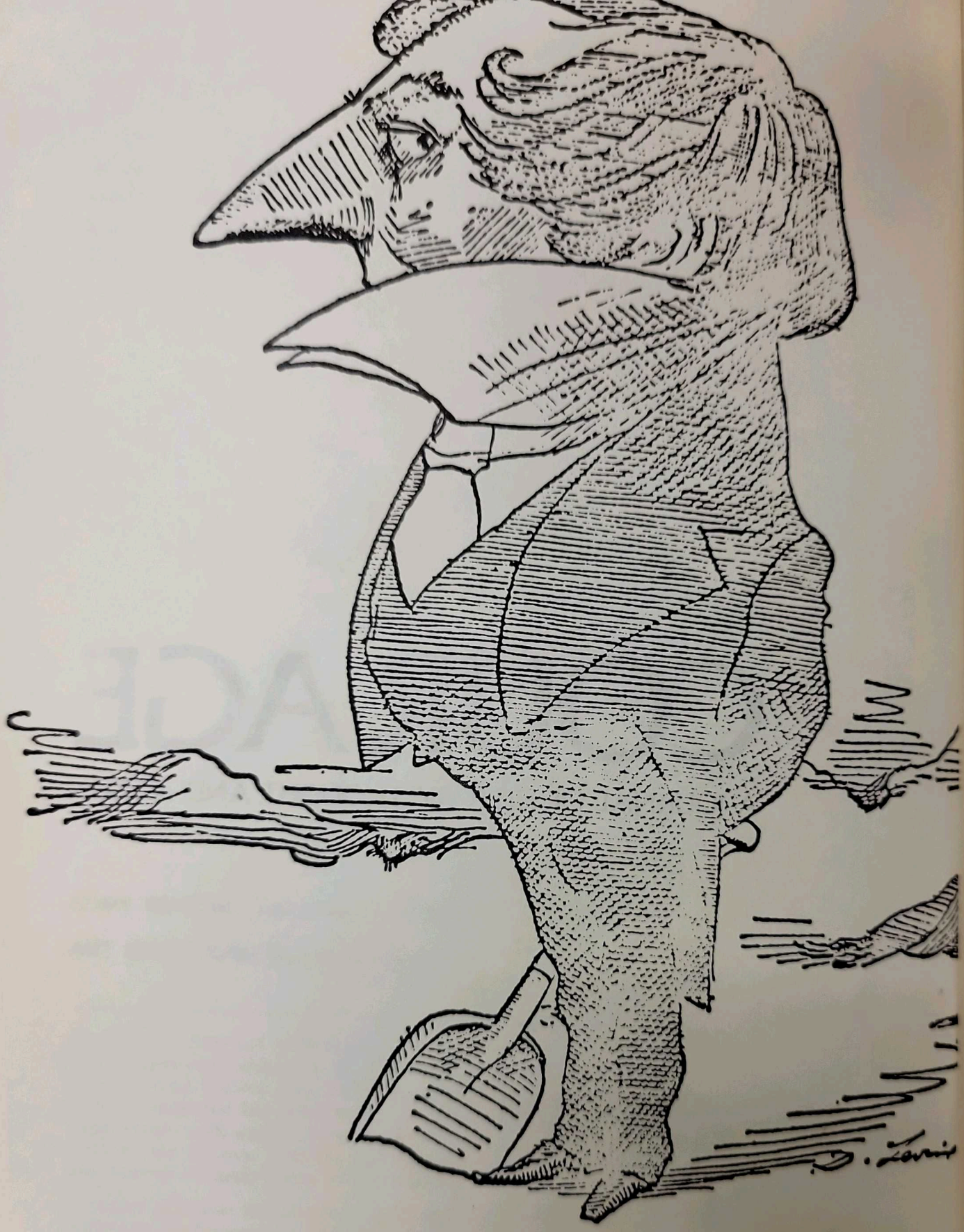


COURAGE

A JOURNAL OF HISTORY, THOUGHT AND ACTION



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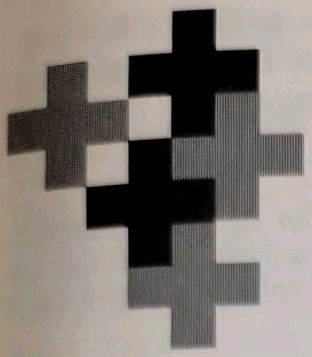

An Image of Joseph Smith, Jr.: A Personality Study

Howard J. Booth

Joseph Smith's intentions were quite clear — to direct all who would hear in the activity of building God's kingdom on earth. While numerous peripheral activities are recorded, this alone was the extent of his "propriate striving," the center of his contribution, the focus of his life.

While the life of any person is difficult if not practically impossible to describe accurately, almost every day we are confronted with the demand to make judgments regarding the nature of persons. Since men's words and actions are judged in light of who they are, the study of personality is regarded as an effective tool in the evaluation of an individual's contribution.

The life of Joseph Smith has long been a fascinating subject to me, especially in casual conversation. However, hounded by more than a curious interest, I have attempted the following limited personality study in serious pursuit of Joseph Smith, the man, a study which necessarily takes into account the mythological language of history.

C. G. Jung suggests that if one wants to understand an individual, one must lay aside views of the average person. Such a statement is especially relevant to the study of Joseph Smith, for his was no ordinary life. For the sake of objectivity our study involves no deliberate attempt to exclude unfriendly sources. Nor is any attempt made to cover the full range of Smith's activities for the nature of his life is too exhaustive and complex. However, enough information will be presented to provide an indication of what the noted Harvard psychologist, Gordon Allport, has called the "unity of personality."

Family Background

Joseph Smith, Jr., born December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont,[1] was the third son in a family of nine children. His family was impoverished and debt-ridden during Joseph's early years of

growing up. Both his father and mother were from poor, rather undistinguished families. However, it is interesting to note the influence his background must have played upon his person. Regarding Joseph's maternal grandparents, Fawn M. Brodie relates,

> . . . the Mack family was marked neither by psychoses nor by literary talent, but rather by a certain nonconformity in thinking and action. As religious dissenters they believed more in the integrity of individual religious experience than in the tradition of any organized sect.[2]

That the spirit of this sentiment, carried down through Joseph Smith's parents, had something to do with the nature of his unique religious thought and behavior, is perfectly logical.

The growing Smith family moved a number of times during Joseph's early years but seemed to succeed no better in any new place. Joseph's father, Joseph Smith, Sr. was a farmer, and sometimes was a shopkeeper for the general village store. Finally in 1816 the family moved to Palmyra, New York, where they hoped to fare better. Here they settled on some land and built a four-room log cabin.

Alice F. Tyler, in her scholarly work *Freedom's Ferment*, presents a view of Joseph's parents, which may need to be examined reservedly, but which adds to the reservoir of information about them.

> Joseph Sr. seems to have been first a Universalist and later a Methodist, although in neither instance with great conviction. As he grew older he dreamed dreams and had what he called visions, which seem to have made some impression on his own family. His wife, Lucy Mack Smith, was far more interested in religion than he, although she found comfort in none of the current sects and was always on the watch for some new cult. Coming of a family addicted to revelations and a belief in the miraculous, she puzzled over their dreams and visions and believed their claims about their persecutions. What comfort her hard life offered seems to have been derived from her neurotic religiosity and from the hope that one of her sons might have a messianic career. The strain of epilepsy in her family was transmitted in a wild form to her children, and they were early imbued with her religious emotionalism.[3]

While the argument for neurosis and epilepsy is believed to be invalidated by other information, still the idea of the validity of religious experience, accepted by his parents, undoubtedly had its nurturing effects on the impressionable early years of Joseph's life.

Indications are that the Smiths taught their own children. Joseph's education apparently failed to extend past an elementary knowledge of the three R's. It must be remembered, however, that this was not unusual for his day.

Opinions of New York neighbors, regarding the character of Joseph, have been carefully recorded by early opponents of Mormonism. "Young Joe" as they called him was "not quite bright," "shiftless," "indolent," "prevaricating," and "cunning." Wide mention of his imagination is also made. A resident of Palmyra, Daniel Hendrix, who helped Smith publish

the *Book of Mormon*, summarized the various opinions of others in this description:

> Joe was the most ragged, lazy fellow in the place, and that is saying a good deal . . . . I can see him now in my mind's eye, with his torn and patched trousers held to his form by a pair of suspenders made out of sheeting, with his calico shirt as dirty and black as the earth, and his uncombed hair sticking through the holes in his old battered hat. In winter I used to pity him, for his shoes were so old and worn out that he must have suffered in the snow and slush; yet Joe had a jovial, easy, don't-care way about him that made him a lot of warm friends . . . . I never knew so ignorant a man as Joe was to have such a fertile imagination. He never could tell a common occurrence in his daily life without embellishing the story with his imagination.[4]

It must be noted that this description of Joe as a boy probably wouldn't distinguish him from generally any other boy in his neighborhood. With reference to his imagination as a man, it must be remembered that he left Palmyra when he was more than 25 years old. Thus, the description would be of a young man, full of natural youthful vision and imagination.

Remembering the family background of non-conformity in religious matters, and taking into account the tendency toward reliance upon their own religious experience, helps us understand how God could come to be conceived as so very personal to Young Joseph and helps to explain his dominant interest in mysticism.

Religious Experiences

In 1820 revivalism had stretched its powerful arm across New York, and Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians were found vying for converts. The Smith family, like so many others, were drawn to the revival meetings and soon the elder Smiths, caught in the spirit of the hour, joined the Presbyterian church. Young Joseph, while he attended the meetings, did not seem so ready to join up. In the "Wentworth Letter," one of the three accounts Joseph himself wrote about his first vision, he describes his retirement to a wooded spot. Praying there alone, concerned about what he should do in life, especially with regard to religious commitment, he found himself "seized" by a power which seemed to spell out fear and destruction. Then a brilliant light dispelled the darkness and "two personages" appeared. He was told to join none of the churches, that he was to have a role in something new that was to come forth.

In passing, it should be noted that confusion arises regarding Joseph's account of his first vision in 1820 when it is compared with Oliver Cowdery's statement in the *Messenger and Advocate*[5] that due to an error in the type, the time of the first vision had been recorded as occurring in Joseph's 15th year rather than in his 17th, the latter being correct.

Smith was to have numerous "experiences" of this nature during his

lifetime. Only one other specially important one will be quoted, however. It should be noted that the information from which the following quote as well as the preceding experience were taken was not published until approximately twenty years after these purported experiences occurred:

Joseph relates:

> On the evening of the 21st of September, A.D. 1823, while I was praying unto God, and endeavoring to exercise faith in the precious promises of scripture, on a sudden a light like that of day, only of a far purer and more glorious appearance and brightness, burst into the room; indeed the first sight was as though the house was filled with consuming fire; the appearance produced a shock that affected the whole body; in a moment a personage stood before me surrounded with a glory yet greater than that with which I was already surrounded . . . . I was informed that I was chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of his purposes in this glorious dispensation.[6]

Critically evaluating such experience and viewing the endeavors of Joseph that were to ensue, Tyler has this to say:

> From this point in the career of Joseph Smith it is impossible to determine what degree of veracity and sincerity to ascribe to the accounts of the young man and his family and friends. It is equally impossible to make any statement for or against the validity of his whole contention without touching upon a controversy that began with the very inception of the Mormon faith and has continued to this day. For many he was to be the prophet and favored confidant of God, the founder of the only true church, and the father and messiah of his people. To countless thousands of others he has seemed a liar and a deliberate charlatan . . . . Conscious or unconscious charlatan, self-deceived or flamboyantly triumphant in his ability to take advantage of the gullibility of others, true or false prophet, the crude, uneducated, neurotic farmer and treasure hunter became a man of unusual powers of leadership and of remarkable success as an organizer. Valid or invalid in its fundamental tenets, the Mormon church became a fact, and Joseph Smith was its Prophet.[7]

While Tyler is right, that we cannot actually prove the truthfulness or validity of such experiences, we would suggest that the impact upon Joseph Smith's life seems to indicate that something happened which was most assuredly significant and real to him. There is scant evidence that Joseph was deceiving others purposefully for whatever profit or personal attention he might receive. Without determining the nature of the "agent" or "source," one may interpret such events with a certain degree of validity in terms of its existential meaning for the individual to whom "revelation" is given and through whom its message is made relevant.

Physical Descriptions

Personality is not be be seen as something apart from one's physical-makeup. Allport's definition of personality reveals no exclusion of the physical: "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psycho*physical* systems that determine his characteristic behavior and thought."[8] Therefore, it is important, we believe, to present

some of the most representative descriptions of Joseph Smith. Some of Joseph's describers were men of national prominence who had actually seen the prophet, visited with him, and then recorded their impressions.

John D. Lee, a Mormon who later left the church, had this to say about the prophet:

> Joseph Smith was a most extraordinary man; he was rather large in stature, some six feet two inches in height, well built, though a little stoop-shouldered, prominent and well-developed features, a Roman nose, light chestnut hair, upper lip full and rather protruding, chin broad and square, an eagle eye, and on the whole there was something in his manners and appearance that was bewitching and winning; his countenance was that of a plain, honest man, full of benevolence and philanthropy and void of deceit or hypocrisy. He was resolute and firm of purpose, strong as most men in physical power, and all who saw were forced to admire him, as he then looked and existed.[9]

Lee alludes to what one might call a "charismatic" countenance, a characteristic that undoubtedly was Joseph's and which contributed to his ability to lead with effectiveness such a large group of people.

In 1844 Josiah Quincy traveled to Nauvoo for the express purpose of visiting with Joseph Smith. During his stay he kept a journal from which the following are excerpts:

> He was a hearty athletic fellow, with blue eyes standing prominently out upon his light complexion, a long nose, and a retreating forehead . . . . resemblance he bore to Elisha R. Potter of Rhode Island, whom I met in Washington in 1826 . . . . Of all men I have met, these two seemed best endowed with that kingly faculty which directs, as by intrinsic right, the feeble or confused souls who are looking for guidance.[10]

Smith was a skilled athlete: He was a good horseman and wrestling was a favorite sport of his. Most important however is the fact that we are given a description which observes, again, a physical expression of charisma, an attraction which acts as a magnet to followers in need.

Personal Characteristics

History is full of real and mythological figures who have been shaped into particular patterns of personality by both professional and lay historians. Seldom does even the historical person possess all the traits ascribed to him by those who follow. Tradition has a funny way of molding leaders to fit the image which exists in the minds of their followers. Such is the case of the history of Joseph Smith's life. This does not mean that we cannot believe descriptions of the past, but it does imply that we must understand history in light of the perceptions of those who have recorded it. This must be remembered when viewing the descriptions of the many traits and personal disposition of Joseph Smith. Any conclusions one might make about his personality, even though informed, are to be regarded as more or less subjective, a projection of the person doing the judging.

Tyler, writing two decades ago, on the basis of her research in-

terpretively summarizes:

> The Prophet . . . . was more than six feet tall, vigorous, and handsome. He was overflowing with self-confidence, energy, and good spirits, and his frequent lapses from virtue made him seem even more a man whom they could love and trust. His amusing pretentions to culture and learning, his vulgarity, his rowdy sense of humor, even his sensuality, were in tune with the rough frontier life they all led, and his shrewdness and organizing ability were respected.[11]

Although Tyler may exaggerate his mundane features, it is to be granted that Joseph was far from pious in his mannerism.

Another evaluative summary is made by a recent writer, Garland Tickemyer, whose doctoral dissertation was most valuable for this study. He says about Smith:

> He was impulsive, bold, self-confident, and consciously dramatic. He rarely hesitated to take risks, and his intuition enabled him to feel and grasp new and unusual possibilities which neither sense nor reason would normally have revealed to him. His contempt for the existing order and his inherent propensity to change and to innovation continually introduced elements of novelty which diverted attention of his followers from their own problems to the wonders of the great enterprise in which they were engaged. He was a man on fire and would permit nothing to stand in the way of the achievement of his purposes.[12]

Smith's intentions were quite clear — to direct all who would hear in the activity of building God's kingdom on earth. While numerous peripheral activities are recorded, this alone was the extent of his "propriate striving," the center of his contribution, the focus of his life.

Smith's activities were well chronicled. Numbers of contemporaries have left their impressions of his personality for us to examine. Parley P. Pratt, one of the men who was with Joseph during a period of prolonged confinement and privation had this to say about the prophet especially with regard to his manner of speaking:

> He possessed a noble boldness and independence of character; his manner was easy and familiar . . . . his language abounding in original eloquence peculiar to himself — not polished — not studied — not smoothed and softened by education and refined by art; but flowing forth in its own native simplicity, and profusely abounding in variety and subject and manner.[13]

Jonas, Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge, after visiting Nauvoo, wrote a letter describing Joseph Smith from which the following is taken:

> . . . . instead of the ignorant and tyrannical upstart, judge my surprise at finding him a sensible, intelligent, companionable and gentlemanly man . . . . He appears to be much respected by all the people about him, and has their entire confidence.[14]

Newspapers of the day followed the activities of the church and its leaders. The following item was carried by the *New York Sun* under the title "Joe Smith, the Mormon Prophet."

This Joe Smith must be set down as an extra-ordinary character, a prophet-hero, as Carlyle might call him. He is one of the great men of this age, and in future history will rank with those who, in one way or another have stamped their impress strongly on society.[15]

The quality of cheerfulness is to be noted in the Prophet among several descriptions. Tickemyer's reference to Wyl's *Mormon Portraits* has a "Mrs. K." saying:

People coming to Nauvoo expected to find a kind of John the Baptist but they found a very jolly prophet. He used to laugh from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, it took every bit of flesh in him.[16]

This quality was certainly in keeping with Smith's basic philosophy of life. It seemed to characterize, in fact, the whole movement of the church.

Love and friendship were the guiding principles of Joseph Smith's philosophy of life. To Joseph these forces combined were the answer to the world's problems. The emphasis Joseph gave here was not the result of some moralistic view of obeying the ethical teachings of Jesus alone. Rather it was more an extension of his own warm personality relating itself compassionately to the lives of others. "Love begets love," Joseph said. Verification of this statement is revealed by the apparent love most of his followers had for him.

Although it is evident that Joseph obtained but limited formal education, there is a significant amount of testimony as to the unusual mental powers he possessed. That these gifts were recognized and respected by the immediate members of his family is indicated by a statement his mother makes describing a typical evening in their home:

I presume our family presented an aspect as singular as any that ever lived upon the face of the earth — all seated in a circle, father, mother, sons, and daughters, and giving the most profound attention to a boy, eighteen years of age, who had never read the Bible through in his life.[17]

Many stories about Joseph's special gifts circulated the territory and mixed reactions occurred. Smith's occult powers were believed in by the more credulous element. The skeptics could only regard him as an out-and-out fraud.

In the 1820's Joseph and his father hunted for buried treasure or articles that had been lost by using a forked stick, usually of witch hazel. Although their success with this divining rod evidently was negligible, still they found employment at various places and times. During these years peculiar objects were being found which the superstitious folk called "magic stones." Tyler calls them "peek stones," although they were more rightly called seer stones. It was thought that gazing into the stone gave one particularly mysterious powers, like the ability to find lost or stolen goods. Apparently Joseph found such a stone while digging a well and used it in the act of some of his early divinings. He was observed

at times placing the stone in his hat where he could gaze at the stone without being detracted by the surroundings, until he received the information he was seeking. It must be noted that Smith seemed embarrassed later on in life about the use of this stone. There are no indications that he used it in his later ministry.

That Joseph dug for money and lost treasures in his early youth is probably true. This was not uncommon in his day. That certain persons could find lost treasure through occult means was generally believed by many, especially in areas where mining was done. Josiah Stoal of Pennsylvania was one of these believers. He is said to have traveled all the way from Pennsylvania just to see what powers Joseph Smith possessed. Smith was supposed to have described in detail the house of Stoal, and all doubt was driven from his mind regarding Smith's abilities. While in court in Bainbridge, Stoal was purported to have given the following testimony. When he was asked whether or not he believed that Joseph could see by the use of a stone below the ground, Stoal replied: "Do I believe it? No, it is not a matter of belief. I positively know it to be true."[18]

Extrasensory Perception

Many events described in the life of Joseph Smith seem to point to the possibility of extrasensory perception. The author owes credit almost wholly to the dissertation by Garland Tickemyer for this hypothesis. Although such a phenomenon is yet quite controversial, it has been receiving a certain amount of attention recently from some respectable scientists.

Joseph's use of the seer stone provides some evidence for this assertion. He complained at times that using the stone caused soreness in his eyes. It is highly possible that in attempting to concentrate, so he could experience extrasensory perception, he would stare at the stone for such a long period of time that his eyes would naturally begin to hurt.

It seems that the seer stone used by Joseph served its purpose in better enabling him to concentrate. That such a thing would have been helpful to Smith is affirmed by a letter by Dr. J. B. Rhine of Duke University, the most outstanding research expert in the field of parapsychology, written to Garland Tickemyer in 1962:

> The use of a stone as a point of fixation is in keeping with the techniques of divination known through the ages. People have used a crystal ball and, very often, some other shiny object. This method of sensory fixation seems to help some persons in their practice of clairvoyant powers, probably in avoiding distraction from the physical conditions around them. It is not a necessary practice but probably has certain psychological value.[19]

There are at least two basic forms of extrasensory perception. Mental telepathy or thought transference is one: Clairvoyance is the other. It has to do with the ability through concentration to see objects that are out of the range of vision. Some evidence indicates Smith to be clairvoyant. In 1875 David Whitmer was interviewed by a reporter from

the *Chicago Times*. Whitmer was being questioned about the method of translating the *Book of Mormon*, used by Smith, and during the course of this interview Whitmer made some rather interesting statements supporting the probability of clairvoyance.

> Having placed the Urim and Thummim (seer stone) in his hat, Joseph placed the hat over his face, and with prophetic eyes read the invisible symbols . . . . I have seen Joseph, however, place it to his eyes and instantly read signs one hundred and sixty miles distant, and tell exactly what was transpiring there. When I went to Harmony after him, he told me the name of every hotel at which I had stopped on the road, read signs, and described various scenes without having ever received any information from me.[20]

As the study of parapsychology has progressed Tickemyer considered what relationship such study might have upon the meaning of the experiences credited to Joseph Smith. Another letter was written to Rhine in which some of Smith's experiences were related. Dr. Rhine was asked to comment on whether or not any of his research would support the possibility of a person with ESP performing such feats. Dr. Rhine replied: "Joseph Smith's action is typical of the clairvoyant type of extrasensory perception . . ."[21]

It is not intended that such an explanation of the Prophetic psychic powers explains away the revelations that came through him. In fact, it could be viewed as adding credulity to the possibility of Smith being influenced by "mental power" superior to his own. As Tickemyer suggests, "If there is a universal mind which seeks to communicate with the human mind, the possibility of successful communication would be greatest through the mind of one who was at least sensitive to the thoughts of his fellow human beings."[22]

Tickemyer concludes:

> The fact that Smith's interest was centered in religion and that exploitation of his gift in purely wonder-working demonstrations was distasteful to him made all the difference in his future. Sparked by a flame of spiritual fire, his mystical genius was cut to a larger mold than that of fortune hunting, and in this mold his special gifts, his brilliant mind, and his organizing genius were to serve him well in his work of establishing a new religion.[23]

Joseph Smith's sense of divine commission brought unity to his personality and provided the self-confidence needed for times of crises. And through his striving, the personality of Joseph Smith has been revealed and we catch an image of what and who he was though faint it may be.

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3. Alice Felt Tyler, **Freedom's Ferment**. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1944, pp. 86-87.
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12. Tickemyer, op. cit., p. 27.
13. Ibid., p. 74.
14. Ibid., p. 64. Quoted from Joseph Smith, et. al., **History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**, Salt Lake City, Utah: The Deseret Book Co., Vol. IV, p. 566.
15. Ibid., p. 65. Quoted from **D.H.C.**, Vol. VI, p. 5.
16. Ibid., p. 78. Quoted from W. Wyl, **Mormon Portraits or the Truth About the Mormon Leaders**. Salt Lake City: Tribune Printing and Publishing Co., 1886, p. 26.
17. Ibid., p. 39. Quoted from Lucy Smith, **Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and his Progenitors for Many Generations**. Plano, Illinois, pub. by RLDS, 1880, p. 87.
18. Ibid., p. 45. Quoted from Lucy Smith, p. 87.
19. J. B. Rhine, Director of Research of the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University. A personal letter to Garland Tickemyer dated April 4, 1962. Quoted with permission of the writer.
20. Tickemyer, op. cit., p. 50. Quoted from **Chicago Times**, August 7, 1875, p. 1, col. 4. This newspaper article was partially reprinted in the **Saint's Herald**, Vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 73-74, February 1, 1876.
21. J. B. Rhine, A personal letter to Garland Tickemyer, dated April 13, 1962.
22. Tickemyer, op. cit., pp. 55-56.
23. Ibid., p. 58.

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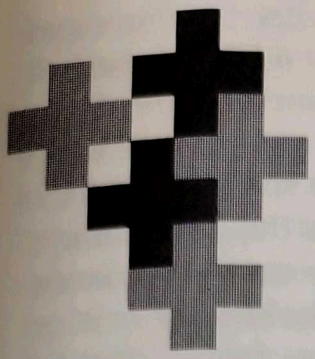


Problems in Interpreting the Book of Mormon as History

Wayne Ham

Perhaps the time has come in the church to recognize that some members want to openly espouse a nonhistorical view of the Book of Mormon.

Wayne Ham was a member of the staff of the Department of Religious Education from 1962 until August, 1970. The problems listed in this article were previously set forth in a study paper written by him for the Curriculum Consultation Committee.

The origin and destiny of the Red Man were among the chief topics for speculation and discussion on the early nineteenth century American frontier. The presence of many Indian burial mounds in the Great Lakes region was a constant source of curiosity to the settlers in that region. In 1823 Ethan Smith, a Vermont pastor, published a book entitled *View of the Hebrews: or the Ten Tribes of Israel in America.*[1] This popular work of fiction traced the origin of the American Indian to ancient Israel, a notion acceptable to a general public that believed that the depository of all wisdom and the source of all civilization was to be found in the Bible. The reception given to Ethan Smith's treatise suggests the presence of a cultural mindset and "will to believe" that would be hospitable to any elaboration of the thesis of the Hebraic origin of the Indian. Thus it is not surprising that the appearance of the *Book of Mormon* generated much excitement among many communities in upper New York State and the Ohio region in the early 1830's.

Those who received the *Book of Mormon* from the hands of eager missionaries were urged not only to assent to the narrative as a historical account of the Indians' ancestory, but also to accept the Book as an evidence that God had broken the silence of centuries to restore his church to the earth by means of a young prophet. Many of the early Latter Day Saint believers took an all-or-nothing approach — if the *Book*

of Mormon was true, the religion expounded by its "author and proprietor" was true also. If the book should ever prove to be false, all validity for the Restoration movement would necessarily have to be disclaimed.

The book immediately attained a canonical status in the minds of the Latter Day Saints that made literal acceptance of it as the revelation of God to the ancient Americans a matter of faith. As far as church members were concerned, the book was impervious to any kind of critical investigation and judgment. Criticism came, of course, from "gentile" and eventually from "apostate" sources, but it made little impact on the Saints in general. The church members who read these critical analyses of the book and understood their implications, by and large took refuge in their "spiritual testimony" concerning the divine authenticity of the book.

As modern historical and textual scholarship in the realm of biblical studies became increasingly appreciated and influential at the grassroots level in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and thus known to some extent to Latter Day Saints, a defensive reaction set in among some church members, resulting in some stiff resistance to allowing the tools of this scholarship to be applied to the church's understandings of the *Book of Mormon*. Thus *Book of Mormon* studies in the past have been characterized by polemics, apologetics, and amateur archaeological surveys whenever the concern has moved beyond merely exploring the intricate details of the very complex narrative of migrations, wars, and religious revivals among the *Book of Mormon* peoples.

Because the temper of our times is such that no movement nor institution nor book can forever remain impervious to the searchlight of scholarly inspection, our times demand that all the rudiments of religious faith be subjected to the scrutiny of reason and empirical research.

As the *Book of Mormon* is examined without any intention solely to amass data to support preconceived notions about it, certain problems concerning traditional understandings of the book stand out. These problems include:

1. *The story of its coming forth.* The actual events culminating in the publication of the book are, as of now, quite irrecoverable in that it is impossible to distill a unified account from all the primary and secondary reports. What information we do possess, largely concerning angelic visitations (Moroni? Nephi?), "translation" processes (hat? peepstone? Urim and Thummim?), the nature of the plates themselves (gold? bronze? "spiritual" matter?), and the subsequent disappearance of the plates, comes to us largely through the vehicle of personal remembrance committed to written form several years after the events occurred, and evidences an amazing amount of contradiction and confusion. [2]

2. *Identifying the book's narrative with a particular setting in time and*

space. Extravagant claims about ancient American archaeology supporting the *Book of Mormon* have been made. Toltec, Mayan, and even Aztec ruins, all of a comparatively late period, have been unfortunately identified with *Book of Mormon* peoples.[3] Indian vocabulary lists have been compiled in an attempt to show a relationship between Indian languages and Hebrew and-or Egyptian. Brigham Young University sponsored archaeological exploration near the Isthmus of Tehuantepec for several years in the hopes of turning up some evidence to show that this area is the "narrow neck of land" mentioned in the *Book of Mormon,* all to no avail. To my knowledge, no non-Latter Day Saint archaeologist allows the *Book of Mormon* any place whatsoever in his reconstruction of the early history of the New World. Meanwhile, Mormon archaeologists and anthropologists are finding it prudent to become increasingly more cautious about admitting *Book of Mormon* data to their own professional understandings of ancient American history and culture.[4]

3. *The book's propensity for reflecting in detail the religious concerns of the American frontier.* Alexander Campbell in 1831 pointed out that every major theological question of the frontier was covered in the *Book of Mormon,* including infant baptism, ordination and ministerial authority, the Trinity, regeneration, the fall of man, the atonement, transubstantiation, fasting, penance, church government, religious experience, the general resurrection, eternal punishment, and even the burning questions of Freemasonry, republican government and the rights of man.[5]

For example, the anti-Masonry stand of the book is particularly interesting in light of the famous Morgan case, a sensational murder trial that spawned a hysterical anti-Masonic crusade that swept the United States beginning from backwoods New York in the late 1820's. Some scholars have suggested the possibility that the many references to the Gadianton robbers and secret combinations in the second half of the *Book of Mormon* be linked to the public fear of the Masons in Joseph's day.

Walter Franklin Prince's thesis in "Psychological Tests for the Authorship of the Book of Mormon"[6] goes even further in suggesting that many of the proper names and other vocabulary items in the *Book of Mormon* represent what in Freudian jargon is called "master word associations." "Mormon," for example, is a subconsciously disguised "Morgan." Such a theory is most certainly not to be taken as established fact, but its possible usefulness must be considered by anyone who is concerned about bringing all the known resources of scholarship to bear on the *Book of Mormon.*

4. *The Christological perspective of the book.* To some students of theology, it would appear that there is a marked incongruity between the Christ Event of the New Testament and the Christ Event of the *Book of Mormon.* The good news of the biblical narrative is that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." The divine Incarnation focused

in One who struggled incessantly to be understood by those whom he called to share the demands of his ministry. More often than not, they seemed unable to grasp the significance and intent of their Master and his mission. He continued to work with them spending much time with them, living out the demands of his mission before their eyes. Even as they watched him go to the cross they were not fully cognizant of the great drama of redemption unfolding before them. And even when the Easter message that Jesus could never really be taken from them had dawned upon their consciousness, they still had not as yet come to the point of reflecting analytically upon their experience, that is, of theologizing about the meaning of Jesus Christ for their personal and corporate existence. Only after many years did a developed Christology emerge within the context of the primitive church.

Yet contrary to this long agonizing struggle to comprehend the meaning of the Incarnation on the part of those who walked and talked with Jesus, another group (so the *Book of Mormon* would have us believe) enjoyed a remarkably developed Christology and were informed of intimate details of Jesus' life and ministry centuries *before* Jesus was even born. If taken literally at face value, this might suggest that the lived-out pain, sorrow, and struggles of the Master in Palestine were largely wasteful, since the results of his sacrifice and a theological understanding of its meaning could be had by some revelational means apart from and independent of the actual occurrence.

But even the type of Christology that the *Book of Mormon* displays raises questions for the modern man since it seems to reflect a nineteenth-century Messianic view of Jesus as a supernatural being. This Jesus, who seemingly knows no bounds of natural law, descends from heaven on several occasions to deliver sermons fashioned initially in a totally different cultural setting. How does God work out his purposes among men? To affirm that a supernatural manifestation of Deity through extra-historical means can convert an entire nation, establish a church, and imbue it with authority to teach and to administer sacramentally is perhaps to question the reason for Incarnation in some other locale.

5. *The book's ethical implications, when viewed as universally binding upon all men.* Some Latter Day Saints, in talking of the *Book of Mormon* as the "fullness of the gospel" (D. & C. 17:2), believe that the book reveals the will of God more perfectly than any other resource we possess. Moreover they would assert that the transmission process involved in preserving and bringing forth the book would by-pass many of the scribal errors to which the Bible was admittedly vulnerable. Thus these people have a particularly uncritical view of the book's moral and doctrinal teachings, which they would hold to be the pure essence of the revelation of God. For such people the slaying of Laban by divine decree, the notion of dark skin as a divine curse, and the waging of holy wars in

the name of God may cause profound problems if such occurrences are accepted as holding up before us inflexible moral axioms that are operative in our life situation now. Such a view would imply that murder, racial segregation and prejudice, and the inhumanity of war may be expressions of the Divine will. To find similar moral implications in portions of the Old Testament would not necessarily be disturbing to us because of our understanding of the evolutionary development of ethics in the biblical narrative. But such affirmations in a book judged by some church members to be "the most correct of any book on earth" raises serious questions, particularly at those points where the *Book of Mormon* position seems to be in contradiction to the radical love ethic taught and embodied by Jesus Christ according to the New Testament.

6. *The use of biblical scripture and ideas as sources.* Several sizeable sections of the King James Version of the Bible are found in the *Book of Mormon*, including twenty-one chapters of Isaiah, the Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments, Malachi 3 and 4, I Corinthians 12:1-11 and Acts 3:22-26. In addition to such fullfledged quotations, the *Book of Mormon* is replete with short biblical expressions. John Hyde counted 298 biblical snatches from the New Testament alone in the first 428 pages of the first edition of *The Book of Mormon.*[7]

An odd mixture of styles is apparent where the *Book of Mormon* text switches back and forth from biblical to nonbiblical readings. For example, the sayings of Jesus are concise where quoted from the King James Version, but in contrast, one statement attributed to Jesus but not adapted from the King James Version is 392 words long (III Nephi 9:87-93).

There would also appear to be some parallel accounts in the biblical literature and the *Book of Mormon* narrative. For example, Daniel's finger of God writing on the wall appears in Alma 8:2; Jacob's blessings of Genesis 49 are suggested in Lehi's ministrations of II Nephi 2 and 3; the raising of Lazarus echoes in Alma 12; the trial of Alma and Amulek would appear to be adapted directly from the trial of Jesus; their escape from prison seems to combine the Philippian jail story, Peter's escape, and Samson's destruction of the temple; the prayers of the Pharisee and Publican seem to provide the basis for Alma 18:15, 16.[8]

All of this may raise the same kind of question as might appear in a teacher's mind when one student's project shows a marked resemblance to a project submitted previously by another student. To what extent was the author (or editor, or compiler) of the *Book of Mormon* dependent upon the King James Version, and why?

7. *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon.* The *Book of Mormon* quotes twenty-one entire chapters of Isaiah — 2-14, 29, and 48-54. Some of these passages are attributed by various biblical scholars to an unnamed prophet or prophets who lived after the time of Isaiah and also after the supposed

date of Lehi migration. If the Deutero-Isaiah theory is substantially correct, questions must certainly be raised concerning how Lehi could take with him writings that had not yet been written. Literary analysis of the Book of Isaiah with the help of computers has affirmed what literary analysis by scholars had previously determined, namely that there was not just one but two or probably three Isaiahs, and the last two lived after the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

In the late 1940's the world was informed of the discovery of scrolls dating back further than any known Bible manuscripts. Included in the Dead Sea finds was a complete Isaiah scroll and an incomplete one. Latter Day Saints were hopeful that these Isaiah scrolls would bring some supportive evidence for the *Book of Mormon*. The theory went like this: The language of the Isaiah passages in the *Book of Mormon* is that of the King James Version, with some variations. Since the King James Version had been translated from the Massoretic Hebrew text (a text developed by Jewish scholars during the early centuries of the Christian era), it was assumed by some Latter Day Saints that the variations in the *Book of Mormon* represented an older, more accurate text than the Massoretic text. The Dead Sea Isaiah scroll, which dates probably from the second century B.C., predates by one thousand years what was previously considered to be the oldest surviving text of the Old Testament.

After a thorough investigation of the matter, reported in "A Textual Comparison of the Isaiah Passages in the *Book of Mormon* with the Same Passages in the St. Mark's Isaiah Scroll of the Dead Sea Community," this writer found no noteworthy instances of support for the *Book of Mormon* claims.[9]

8. *The matter of Book of Mormon anachronisms.* Those who approach the *Book of Mormon* with the view of proving it to be essentially what it seems to claim to be — a record of the history of ancient Americans who lived between 2200 BC and AD 400 — immediately find themselves having to deal with the problem of anachronisms. For example, verbal anachronisms occur in the use of such modern (i.e. post-Lehi) and nonHebraic terms as Bible, Jews, Gentiles, church, synagogue, baptize, priestcraft, adieu, and even the names of Sam and Timothy. The problem lies not alone in the linguistic label but more often in the fact that the institution to which the label points (e.g. synagogue, church) is a post-Lehi development.

Other possible anachronisms include the mention of steel, silks, Copernican astronomy, and medical knowledge of blood circulation and pores before their known discovery. The findings of early American archaeology do not substantiate the claim that such items were known among the ancient Americans before their discovery in the Old World. In addition, the book mentions crops and animals introduced to America by later European settlers, notably wheat, barley, cows, hogs, asses, sheep, and horses. Sidney B. Sperry, eminent Mormon bibliophile, has at-

tempted to answer these and other criticisms, but admittedly his logic and data selection would appeal only to those who already have a faith commitment to the historical validity of the *Book of Mormon* narrative.[10]

9. *The changes in the Book of Mormon.* While the book itself confesses the possibility of errors, many claims concerning the verbal accuracy of the book have long been made by *Book of Mormon* adherents. Joseph Smith himself at one time stated that "the *Book of Mormon* was the most correct of any book on earth." Modern Microfilm Company of Salt Lake City has recently published a work documenting 3,913 changes in the *Book of Mormon* since its first printing.[11] A few of the changes, made by Joseph Smith himself in the second edition, would seem to reflect a shift of theological orientation. For example, "the son of" added in I Nephi 3:86 to avoid a definite identification of Jesus as the Ever-lasting God. Admittedly most of the thousands of changes are corrections of obvious grammatical errors, although not all faulty grammar was eliminated as any reader with a knowledge of the English language will confess.

This evidence naturally raises questions concerning the revelational process involved in bringing forth the book. Some of the changes suggest a maturing of judgment and theological sensitivities and would suggest a conceptual view of revelation. But how can a conceptual process of revelation possibly produce a historical account of some phase of history hitherto unknown? In any event, the fact of change belies some widespread and currently held notions of the impeccability of the Book, and again places the need for a more honest and open critical examination of the book clearly before us.

Conclusion. None of the above problem areas "disprove" the *Book of Mormon.* They do, however, raise some questions about our traditional understandings concerning the book. Perhaps for some church members answers to the questions raised in this article would seem to be readily available. For others, however, quick and easy answers will not solve the dilemma. Perhaps the time has come in the church to recognize that some members want to openly espouse a nonliteral view of the *Book of Mormon,* treating it as a nonhistorical treatise in much the same manner as modern critics view the books of Jonah, Ruth, Job, and Daniel in the Old Testament. Freed from some of the traditional hangups involved with having to accept unquestioningly the historicity of the *Book of Mormon,* these members could then read the book as a product of the American frontier and honor it as an interesting artifact of the Restoration movement in the nineteenth century, perhaps thus "enjoying" this fascinating piece of literature for the very first time.

1. Ethan Smith, **View of the Hebrews: or the Ten Tribes of Israel in America**. Poultney, Vt., 1823. This has been photographically reproduced by Modern Microfilm Co., Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110.

2. The angel is identified as Nephi in **Times and Seasons**, Vol. 3, No. 12, p. 753. On the problem of the method of translation, two articles in the 1962 **Saints' Herald** ably presented differing views. Clair E. Weldon, in "Two Transparent Stones," (September 1, 1962, pp. 16-20, 23) presented the view most commonly held by Latter Day Saints, while James E. Lancaster, in " 'By the Gift and Power of God'," (November 15, 1962, pp. 14-18, 22, 33) presented the case for the "face in hat" with "peepstone" method.

3. The Toltec civilization thrived about A.D. 800, the Mayans were on the scene since about 1000 B.C. but their civilization didn't reach its greatest heights until about A.D. 600, and the Aztec nation did not flower until about A.D. 1300.

4. Modern Microfilm's book, **Mormonism, Shadow or Reality?** quotes N. Wells Jakeman, Mormon anthropologist, as saying: "So far as is known to the writer, no non-Mormon archaelogist at the present time is using the Book of Mormon as a guide in archeological research. Nor does he know of any non-Mormon archaelogist who holds that the American Indians are descendants of the Jews, or that Christianity was known in America in the first century of our era." **University Archaelogical Society Newsletter**, No. 57, March 25, 1959. p. 4.

5. Alexander Campbell, "Delusions," **Millennial Harbinger**, Vol. 2 (February 7, 1831).

6. Walter Franklin Prince, "Psychological Tests for the Authorship of the Book of Mormon," **American Journal of Psychology, XXVIII** (July 1917), 373-89.

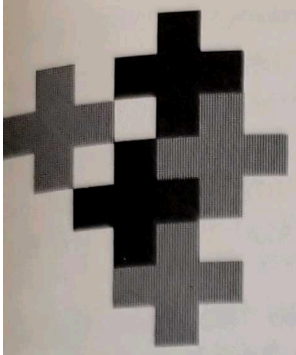
7. John Hyde, Jun., **Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs** (New York: W. P. Fetridge & Co., 1857), p. 233.

8. Other apparent biblical allusions in the **Book of Mormon** include Alma's conversion in a similar fashion to Paul's; Ammon, like David, slaying six sheep rustlers with a sling; the daughter of Jared, like Salome, dancing for the king in return for a decapitation; Jesus' blessing of the children; and an abduction scene similar to that involving the daughters of Shilo.

9. Wayne Ham, "A Textual Comparison of the Isaiah Passages in the Book of Mormon with the Same Passages in the St. Mark's Isaiah Scroll of the Dead Sea Community" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Dept. of Biblical Languages, Brigham Young University, 1961). For further study on the Deutero-Isaiah problem, see Leland W. Negaard, "The Problem of Second Isaiah in the Book of Mormon" (Unpublished B.D. thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1961).

10. Sidney Sperry, **Answers to Book of Mormon Questions** (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967).

11. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, **3,913 Changes in the Book of Mormon** (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co., 1965).



The Church as a Missionary Church

A. M. Pelletier

The missionary church makes its place as a potent force of ministry, interpreting and relating the gospel to the times in which it ministers.

Despite several claims, Jesus did establish a church.[1] He freely invites mankind to intelligent commitment and involvement in the life of the church.[2] In representing our Lord, we represent the very best in the universe.[3] This demands that we acquire skills and methods which will share God's purposes with maximum efficiency.[4] The prophetic church addresses itself to the issues of life because Jesus is the life,[5] and He wants each person to discover the fullness of selfhood; but it must be a selfhood which relates to God and to fellowman.[6] The purpose of this article is to explore these premises and to validate them in operational experience.

The Church as the Body of Christ

Jesus did establish a church but it was not to "prove" something. His purpose is to "save" someone. Thus, Jesus did not come to establish a church in its own right or to teach a gospel — not even to teach "the" gospel. *He came to teach men and to save them.* We are not suggesting that the church is not important, nor are we negating its authenticity; we are simply saying the church needs to be viewed in proper perspective and relatedness. The church, viewed in this manner, is even more authentic. Men without God are confounded, they grope, and are nihilistic. Without God they are harassed by Cartesian doubt, doubting not only God's existence, but doubting the existence of mankind, matter itself and even their own existence. Men cannot properly relate to fellowmen if they don't know themselves, as Descartes later reasoned. The church shares in the ministry of Christ, pointing the way to a true self identity that has roots in eternity. Men were with God in the beginning. The church, and its revelation in Christ, restores men to a memory of that

existence and develops them to be "at home" in His presence.

The church is called to be the body of Christ[7] with Jesus as its living head.[8] In simple analogy, Apostle Paul refers to the church as a living organism.[9] Members of the church are called "members (of the body) in particular, underscoring operational significance for membership. Such members will suffer when the church suffers and rejoice at its accomplishments and joys.

Alma, prophetically adds wisdom and insight into the operational significance of church membership.[10] His invitation to church membership, through baptism, is an invitation to complete involvement in the lives of people and in the blessings of God. The committed member will bring comfort, compassion, empathy, witness and self-discipline.

The Lord established the church to provide men with revelatory insight, reconciliatory ministry, transforming power, sacramental renewal, dedicatory involvement and confirmatory destiny. As He has through the ages, God continues to call to the life of the church "such as should be save."[11]

Called to Represent God

"God *has been* good to me" is too archaic a testimony for these hastening times. People are demanding up-to-dateness and relevance. If our religion is purposive and truly authentic it will yield the testimony, "God *is* good to me." Men, though interested in what has happened, are more concerned in what *is* happening. History has its place but is admittedly biased (for good or bad) but news is subject to greater empirical testability. The times cry out for a God who is alive. The living God is speaking today. Committed disciples will hear Him in multitudinous ways, their religion will be vitally experiential and pragmatic. Functional and purposive, such religion will be productive of good news in our times. The good news needs to be shared in vibrant testimony.

The only part of the gospel you can retain is that which you freely give to others.[12] Find a gospel to give you selfish comfort and eschatological insurance and hell is your destiny while fearsome misery and arrogant self-righteousness is your present albatross. A corollary may be drawn: the musician who indefatigably studies is always becoming a better musician as long as he practices and shares the beauty of his music with others. Let him relax his practice and refrain from sharing it and he increasingly loses proficiency until even some of music's basic rudiments suffer extinction from his memory. Not only does this musician fail to learn and enjoy more music, he begins to lose what he already has. The religious experience is like that.[13] A testimony is the declaration of an eye witness[14] and is available to all who will dare to adventure with God.

Testimony is vital to the life of a vibrant church. Without it, the church stagnates in doctrinaire tradition which is devoid of contemporary experience and futuristic hope and vision. The church with a

testimony does not abandon tradition; it relates to it and makes it credulous in the reliable validation of contemporary experience.

Dr. David Gnanapragasm Moses, president of Hislop College in Nagpur, India, spoke of crucial needs, "What will be needed is a strong church, rooted and grounded in the love of Christ and so full of the experience of the wonderful things that God has done for her that she cannot keep her mouth shut."[15] The world joins him in such a plea. Testimony is currently growing out of your experience. Share it!

The person with a testimony comprehends the potency of God's recorded dedication, "this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality, and eternal life of man.[16] The person, and in turn, the church whose religion is experiential is sharing the hope of eternal life and the opportunities of immortality which involve relatedness to God. Perfection calls us to service and demands proficiency which is always on the frontier of additional truth. It demands a wedding of faith and study in our learning,[17] and consecrates that learning to the counsels of the Lord[18] and a competent service.[19]

Developing Skills and Methods

Wise counsel is given to seek learning by "study and also by faith"[20] and to study all good books[21] to obtain maximum knowledge in the sciences, the arts and the humanities.[22] The purpose in all this is for competency of service,[23] knowing that we are on the Lord's errand.[24]

Our studies may be epistemological or metaphysical but we may also learn by doing and be teleological and ethical in axiological insightness. The cry to be doers of the word[25] is an old one and just as important in our times.

The person who stands still never gets a job done. However, one may be busy with busy work, moving but not exploring, settling into a comfortable rut. Know this: a rut is a grave with both ends knocked out. Some are like the three little philosopher monkeys; see no evil, speak no evil, and hear no evil. Remember, the monkeys who refused to face issues for fear of consequences and who claimed passive virtues by blocking the agents of potential evil, were in fact, not virtuous at all, since in covering these vital areas they could not even speak, see, or hear the good. They might be likened to the five foolish virgins[26] who were good, but in reality, good for nothing.

The missionary church does not busy itself with the childishness that calls attention to itself as those appointed to destroy the faith of the people or deny the credulity or impugn the motives of the pioneers of the past. Instead, the missionary church makes "its own place in the sun." It makes its place as a potent force of ministry, interpreting and relating the gospel to the times in which it ministers.

The genius of the gospel, like the word of the Lord, endures forever.[27] However, the application and promulgation of the gospel is relative, conditioned by the abilities and apparatus of the times in which it is

proclaimed. There is always the need for increasing skills and effective methodology.

This spirit has led the church to explore various missionary methods, developing methodological skills. As better methods have presented themselves we have modified older methods or abandoned the no longer efficient tools. The vitality of the Restoration has been propagated in schoolhouse preaching, street-corner and public-park services, inter-church debates, church schools, ministry in houses of worship, rented halls, series preaching, cottage meetings, visual aids, radio, television, drama, crusades, small group discussions, counseling ministry, person to person witnessing and a host of other methods. Each method has proven itself effective in situational experiences to the degree that those who were missionizing had developed skills and accepted Divine direction.

Many of the aforementioned methods are still workable with continued modification. Other methods are being explored. Still others are incarnate in vision for the foreseeable future. We cannot — must not — succumb to "either-or" fallacies. There is no *one* method. The prophetic and missionary church is not restless for change for change sake. Its restlessness lies in exploring the vision of greater opportunity,[28] constant improvement and the development of skills. Family ministry, news and communication media, group discussion and therapy, drama, counseling services, neighborhood renewal ministry, inner-city ministry, ministry to the lonely and unloved and other areas *ad infinitum* challenge the vibrant church.

My observations have been that persons who busy themselves in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ are discovering better methods and acquiring skills. Such people are positive and can't be busy in the notorious name calling and negation that seems to stir so much contemporary restlessness.

Facing the Issues of Life

Jesus has announced, "I am come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly . . .," [29] "I am the way, the truth and the life . . .," [30] "follow me and do the things which you have seen me do." [31] Travel with Jesus, observe his ministry, and see how it can be applied today. Persons of vision will face the issues of life and prayerfully discover ways of ministering. The missionary church is not judgmental; its call is to compassioned shepherding. To name but a few, the issues of life deal with morality and immorality, poverty, social conflicts, loneliness, drug addiction, alcoholism, spiritual impoverishment, fallacies, divorce, crime and delinquency. The missionary church looks at all issues honestly and objectively, then in a Christ-like spirit applies the redemptive gospel through inspired and competent methods to help each individual see his own infinite worth and the infinite worth of all others. A closer walk with Jesus Christ reveals he was active in the fields

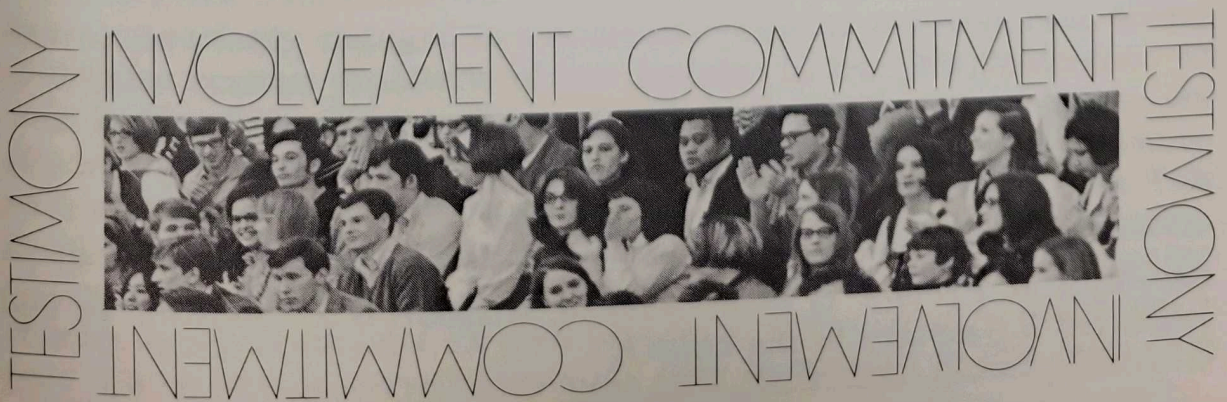
of ministry which called men to be better selves.[32] This process is indicative of the ministry of atonement.

Relatedness to God and Fellowmen

The word "atonement" etymologically means, "*at one* in accordment (action)." The vibrant church helps the individual to relate to God. The sacraments can be excitingly meaningful in this relationship. The wisdom of Jesus urges, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength . . . and love thy neighbor as thyself." [33] Indeed, one cannot know what it is to love his fellowman until he has acquired a love for God. Such an acquisition leads to a sound love of self and, thus, to self respect. Self respect is necessary before one can respect another person.

The missionary church will meet the person where he is and validly take him to God and self discovery. Let it be understood, however, that self-discovery does not mean that one is called and motivated to "do his own thing" without respect of others. Rather, it means the discovery of the wholesome full self which is made possible through a willing application of the fulness of the gospel. It is for this purpose that He had restored His church.

The living church calls for an exploring people who are righteous, daring[34] and competent in Christian witnessing. The application of the gospel in missionary witness is productive in bringing forth the cause of Zion.[35] Let us unite in bringing forth the cause, the effect will surely follow. We've got the greatest message on earth to share — all that is needed is willing, obedient and dedicated saints.



1. Matt. 16:14-19; **Doctrine and Covenants** 3:12b, 16, 17.
2. Matt. 11:29, 30; II Nephi 11:95-115.
3. Isaiah 45:18-25; Psalms 19:7-9; Mosiah 2:13-15.
4. **Doctrine and Covenants** 85:20-22.
5. John 14:6.
6. Matt. 22:35-59; James 2:14-19; I John 4:10-21.
7. I Cor. 12:27; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 1:22,23.
8. Col. 1:17,18.
9. I Cor. 12:13-31.
10. Mosiah 9:39-42.
11. Acts 2:47.
12. Matt. 16:27,28.
13. Matt. 25:26-31.
14. John 3:11; II Peter 1:16-21; I John 1:1-5.
15. from a speech to the International Missionary Council in New York City, 1958.
16. **Doctrine and Covenants** 22-23.
17. **Ibid.**, 85:36.
18. II Nephi 6:61.
19. **Doctrine and Covenants** 85:21e.
20. **Ibid.**, 85:36a.
21. **Ibid.**, 85 5b.
22. **Ibid.**, 85:21.
23. **Ibid.**, 85:21e, 22.
24. **Ibid.**, 64:6b.
25. James 1:22-27.
26. Matt. 25:1-12.
27. Matt. 24:36; Psalms 100:5, I Peter 1:35.
28. **Doctrine and Covenants** 143:3b.
29. John 10:10.
30. John 14:6.
31. John 14:12; II Nephi 13:15, III Nephi 12:35.
32. Luke 4:17-21.
33. Mark 12:35,36.
34. **Doctrine and Covenants** 58:6c-f.
35. **Ibid.**, 11:3,4; Matt. 6:38; Matt. 5:22.

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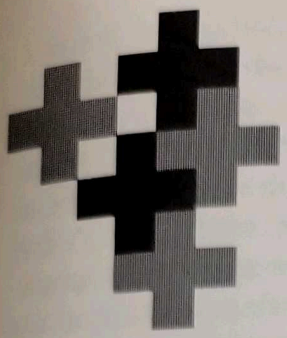

A Loss of Nerve

Alma R. Blair

Since personal, social, and moral problems often become "political," the church must recognize it may become involved in the political arena.

In his *Five Stages of Greek Religion*,[1] Dr. Gilbert Murray refers to the "loss of nerve" that marked the first centuries of the Roman Empire. In a time of uncertainty and turmoil, the Hellenistic world retreated from the practical problems of the day and sought comfort in a "spirituality" divorced from life. It seems to me that something like this happened to the Reorganized Latter-Day Saints sometime after the death of Joseph Smith the Martyr. Exactly when it happened is not so important. Our failure to openly face the problems of our day, to study them, to reason about them, and finally to take a stand concerning them is important. I am speaking not about individuals but the corporate group we call the church with its various levels for action from the congregation to the world church. I contend it is intolerable to continue to expect individual resources and action to be sufficient for the social and political realities of our world. We must *consciously* realize our moral obligation as a church to meet, as best we can, those issues which are literally life and death for millions. We must regain our nerve.

There are indications this may be happening. Local congregations have increasingly engaged in community projects and have been willing to discuss various problems of our society. In the 1970 Conference we went farther toward committing ourselves than ever before. But we are glacially slow and nervelessly cautious. Our failure to pass the resolution on environment[2] marks us as wilfully blind, devoid of nerve, or both. This is only one example but an important one since the proposal would seem so non-controversial. After all, who could vote for pollution or against the church trying to educate its own people on environmental problems? I read it as a loss of nerve,[3] hopefully only temporary in this case. Cer-

tainly there are some more controversial issues to be faced.

The suggestion that the church should take a stand on "social and political" issues does not mean that as a body we should all vote Republican, or Christian Democratic, or Labor Party at the next elections. Nor does it mean that the church ought to establish its own political arm for lobbying or a system to control any government. Yet if the church believes certain things about human life it has a duty to speak about those things. Since personal, social, and moral problems often become "political" the church must recognize it may become involved in the political arena. This is sometimes not only necessary but desirable as well. The alternative is to be completely ineffective. The Reorganization has found this to be true in the past in spite of its attempts to remain "non-political." Before returning to this in the last of this article I want to make some objections to arguments frequently advanced against any kind of "social" or "political" activity by the church.

The problems inherent in any group's attempt to grapple with practical issues where the answers are not obvious are formidable. The difficulties do not obviate the necessity to speak to the issues, however. After careful consideration a group may find it impossible to reach a conclusion. If it honestly recognizes its limitations in skills, insights, or finances it is no disgrace, although it may be a disgrace to fail to correct its limitations. For example, the argument "We can't do everything," and its interesting obverse "We are already doing something," may be based on careful examination of the group's realities, or may merely be an excuse. I would suggest we have never really determined our potential as a church. We have not tried to equate our resources with possible use in social action. We have not considered our goals as including such action, to any extent, and so cannot be certain what we might accomplish.

Another partially valid set of arguments centers around the dangers to the internal unity of the church if it becomes involved in discussing controversial issues. While the fears that individual rights of expression and belief may be abrogated, that the "righteous" may condemn the "sinner," and that dissension may split the church are important considerations, they are more dangers to be aware of and avoided than conclusive arguments against involvement. The church has met these dangers before, sometimes on questions of less importance. Whenever matters of significance are to be considered, the principles of common consent, repentance, and charity ought to be earnestly sought and practiced.

If we fear to even discuss the Vietnam war, segregated housing, obscenity, or pollution we must ask ourselves who and what we are. If, as I suspect, our failure to talk about such things is partly due to our existing divisions, may not our admission of it be the opening door to our repentance and eventual unification? If our common concern and prayers

cannot bridge our honest differences, then we have indeed been overcome by the world. And if we do talk and pray for direction and find it, dare we remain silent? Will oppressed minorities, the wounded, the starving bless us for refusing to consider their problems?

The final arguments considered here are those challenging the propriety of the church addressing itself to social and political issues. Both theoretical and practical objections are raised. Some of the objections are real and some fatuous.[4] That the church can't or shouldn't attack every social problem is axiomatic, but the inability to do everything is hardly justification for doing nothing. To suggest that individuals or stakes[5] may properly engage in direct action should not necessarily limit the role of the larger body. In fact, it would seem difficult to explain why other agencies of the church, including the World Conference, ought not participate if stake action is encouraged. The selection of the problems to concentrate on and the means best suited to approach each problem are not insoluble.[6] The basic question is one of desire, not of technique.

The essence of the doubts about the propriety of the church's involvement in societal problems seems to be the idea the church has other, more essential, missions to perform. This is sometimes stated as the fear that the church will lose its identity and become part of some ecumenical movement or social action group, or that it will become merely another social agency.[7] The church's mission is intimately involved with bringing individuals to a fuller, eternal personhood. This ought not be forgotten, but it is doubtful if it can be achieved apart from the church's mission to effect social change. In several senses the two are the same mission. It is impossible to speak of "bringing men to Christ" or "building Zion" without considering social problems which are at the same time individual problems.

To illustrate: If Independence is to be the "Center Place" of Zion, the issue of segregation in housing must be met directly. In Zion Negroes and other non-Caucasians will either live outside Independence, be segregated within it, or live where they choose.[8] The first two hardly seem "Zionic" and the last implies, in our present situation, a "political" decision supporting fair housing in Independence at least. It is inconceivable that we can preach "Zion" without preaching something about desegregation unless we admit that "bringing men to Christ" means Negroes cannot bring themselves to Independence to live where they choose. In a racially segregated society even preaching may be a "political" act although this ought not be the only such act of the church.

In addition, the church has a responsibility to educate its members and society toward tolerance and love. We have always said this but we have seldom tied it to the practical realities implied for the individual's life. It is possible, therefore, for R.L.D.S. to learn that "God loves all the little children . . . red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in his

sight . . ." and at the same time to proclaim policies of housing and other segregation to "keep blacks in their place" which would presumably carry over into "Zion." The church has never forced itself to look at the problem in any serious, concentrated way. Sporadic comments and sentimental platitudes about love are hardly substitutes for an education and activity oriented program designed to openly thrash out such controversial topics on all levels of the church. Perhaps we feel it makes no difference either to society or to the welfare of the individual soul?

The arguments against direct church involvement mentioned above are expressed openly. Two other fears are seldom stated but are very important, I believe. One of these is the challenge to the authoritativeness of the church which might arise if the church took an identifiable stand on an issue and then had to change its position. Our claim of being the "one, true church" and the institutional forms and ideas developed to support this claim make a heavy burden. What if we were wrong once? It might be traumatic and embarrassing, until we have developed new self-conceptions of our place in the world.

The second fear has grown from our reading of our history, a false reading. We were unnerved by our experiences in Kirtland, Independence, Far West, and especially Nauvoo during the 1830's and 1840's. We "learned" that social and political activity could be dangerous. Unlike the Utah Mormons who had to act together to survive in the West, the Reorganization came from congregations separated from each other and dependent on the good will of the gentiles who surrounded them. Joseph Smith III's policies of gathering slowly and insisting that they gain the respect of those in their communities probably militated against involvement in controversial issues. Other factors such as the traditional ideal of separation of church and state and opposition to the control exercised by the Utah leaders undoubtedly played a part, but the ground for a quiescent R.L.D.S. Church was laid in an earlier interpretation of their past. I hope that another look at that past and at the early Reorganization may help to change our non-involvement stance more rapidly than would otherwise be the case.

In vision and practice Joseph Smith II so actively related religious goals and secular means to each other that it is difficult to separate them.[10] His repeated attempts to create communities clearly indicate he thought of Zion as specific and practical. He was constantly running into the hard necessity of *doing* something to make the dream real. The creation of city plans, governments, means of caring for the poor and the immigrant, and numerous other projects at times make him appear a bit too "nervy." Yet it is difficult to fault him when we once admit the validity of his dream. Even if we cannot agree with all provisions of the Nauvoo Charter, for instance, the point is he had to act in the political realm and create some kind of governmental system.

When seen in the context of the times Joseph's candidacy for the

office of President of the United States or the much-maligned "bloc voting" of 1844 may seem less mistakes than inevitabilities.[11] Given the tenuous balance of power in Illinois politics and the intense desire of both Whigs and Democrats to capture the significant Nauvoo votes it is difficult to see how the Saints could have avoided controversy. Even if they had split their votes evenly,[12] or had not voted at all, it is quite likely they would have been attacked for their decision. While it is probably wrong to vote *en masse* as a principle since this would violate individual conscience, it is also not proper to conclude that "bloc voting" is always wrong or that its avoidance will always ensure peaceful co-existence. In this case the combination of local politics and the existence of a community of Saints is probably more significant than any "bloc vote."

Joseph Smith III seems to have been aware that any "gathering" was in itself a political act. He was concerned with the character of the Saints and the proper timing for such a venture. Jason Briggs expressed an even more radical opposition:

> Shall we ignore experience in respect to this subject, or shall we learn by it and transmit the wisdom learnt down to coming generations? . . . It is not a small thing to pauperize a whole community as has been done in every instance of Zion building and gathering and it is a false accusation to charge the people who became the victims with unfaithfulness as a cause of failure. . . . The failure resulted from the theory.[13]

The gathering was a central idea and could not be abandoned, of course, but antagonism to any kind of connection with politics was common in the early Reorganizations.[14] In 1876 an editor of the *Herald* suggested "no subject is of less importance to the Saints than politics."[15] His example of having voted but once in ten years was probably not followed by many in spite of the scandalous character of post Civil War politics which makes such a position partially justifiable. It is interesting to note, however, that the Saints did not generally see fit to change the political climate by encouraging young men to run for office. Rather they were usually admonished to avoid the dangers of public office.

This attitude did not keep all from running, nor did it prevent the Saints from voting as a bloc. Section 95: 2,d, of the *Doctrine and Covenants* advised the members " . . . honest men and wise should be sought for, diligently, and good men and wise, ye should observe to uphold . . ."[16] When a Saint ran for office the practical translation of the revelation was a vote for him. A typical example is the shift in votes in 1883 when Elijah Banta ran for the Iowa House of Representatives seat from Decatur County. The Lamoni vote was 2 to 1 in favor of Republicans for all other races but reversed itself to a 2 to 1 majority for Democrat Banta.[17] The example was not an isolated instance [18] and brought sharp reaction from the local paper, the Republican *Decatur County Journal* of Leon:

> One word to our Republican Mormon friends. If you were told we opposed Mr. Banta because he is a Mormon, it was a falsehood. We had no objection to his religion. We opposed him as a political trickster, and a man of intemperance (sic) habits; but most of our Republican Mormon friends supported him because he is a member of their church. To this we solemnly protest, and declare we do not wish to mix politics and religion. [18]

Bloc voting also appeared when temperance was an issue.[19] Temperance was a "moral" question but it was also a very hot "political" question. Joseph Luff, writing from Independence in 1888, praised the Saints efforts in helping make that town dry: "Words fail me in attempting to express the rapturous feeling that pervades the hearts of the Saints 'in Zion.' . . . Not one member of this branch voted 'Wet' that we could learn of." In this instance the Saints gathered friendship more than hostility for Luff notes, "The Saints stand higher today in the estimation of the reputable portion of this community than ever before."[20] Joseph Smith III was widely known for his temperance activities on the state level and was quite distressed when Lamoni failed to incorporate since this prevented control of the saloons by the citizens.[21]

Besides engaging in bloc voting the church attempted to direct United States policies on the "Mormon Question." Many articles were written by the R.L.D.S. supporting the Edmunds Bill and arguing that Utah should not be made a state until her religious leaders brought their church practices and political sentiments more into line with those of the rest of the nation.[22] Joseph Smith III and other leaders visited Washington in official capacity to influence legislators and cabinet members. Their mission was to prevent unfavorable action against the R.L.D.S. church through ignorance on the part of government leaders, and also to bring pressure against the Utah church and its political policies.[23] In 1878 Joseph Smith went so far as to attempt to have an R.L.D.S. appointed Governor of the Territory of Utah.[24] Although the church was not successful in this endeavor, its long term influence on the "Mormon Question" may have been significant. These direct forays into the national political scene at least made the distinction between the two groups known more widely, and the church got much favorable publicity.

Perhaps these examples are enough to illustrate that although the early Reorganized Latter Day Saints were not always conscious of it, and would certainly have denied it, they were in fact a very "political" group. The reason they were is simple: Certain values they held important enough to act on were also of concern to others outside the church. If they had not believed enough or cared enough to act, or if others had not felt them to be issues, the church would have avoided any possibility of controversy. We may disagree with their estimation of what was important, but that is neither here nor there since each generation must decide what it believes in, if anything, and must decide what it will stand for, if

anything. In remembering Nauvoo they rejected much of its political life, but they could not reject their own values.

As always, our history leads us to ask ourselves about ourselves. We misconstrue the past if we believe we can be "non-political" and still mean anything to the world of the present and future. The subjects we may choose and the means we may choose will differ from those of past generations. For us, as for them, it is dangerous to speak to any social issue, but to not do so is a sure sign of a living death. Our awareness of the political nature of the church's past and the world's present necessity may help free us to consciously act in those areas we have often avoided as a church, the body of Christ. It is a matter of our sense of values — and of our nerve.

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1. Gilbert Murray, **Five Stages of Greek Religion.** Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925. Murray, in his last chapter, points out that Christianity is one of the religions of the time suffering this fate to occur.

2. See **World Conference Bulletin,** (April 10, 1970), pp. 308-309, and (April 11, 1970), p. 328.

3. Since the 1970 conference I have heard dissatisfaction with the wording of this and other social action resolutions mentioned as the reason for their failure. If this is not an excuse, it clearly points out our impotency.

4. I am embarrassed to mention the argument appearing on the 1970 Conference floor several times that the world church ought not bother itself with "local" matters such as the U. S. draft system. We already legislate on and appropriate money for many "local" items. There is nothing which isn't "local" in some sense or other, and they have a disconcerting habit of becoming global in nature in these days.

5. See Clifford A. Cole's "The Doctrine of the Church," **University Bulletin**, XX, (Winter, 1968).

6. The "Commission" system instituted several years ago is a partial attempt at an answer. Probably a variety of means will be necessarily based on the type of problem and level of church organization best suited to handle the matter.

7. Clifford Cole, **op. cit.**, has seemingly taken this tack. His logic is difficult to follow because although he states social, economic, and political involvement by the church is necessary to build the kingdom, he also seems to reject commitment on the world church level. Harold Schneebeck in "The Doctrine of the Church: A Reply to Clifford A. Cole," **Courage**, (April, 1970), pp. 19-24, has pointed out that Cole's doctrine of the church emphasizes a separation of the religious and secular in the world. This may account for Cole's fears and seeming inconsistencies.

8. I am excluding the chimerical notion that God will change all dark-skinned people into white-skinned people. Besides its blatant racism the idea is a false solution to our internal problem of hatred. To wait until the millenium when all problems will presumably be solved in the "twinkling of an eye" is wishful thinking at its worst and condemns us to unnecessary anguish in the meantime.

9. Again, I am not unaware of the turmoil this might cause in the church but insist that social problems are individual problems as well and the church cannot ignore one without ignoring the other. Hopefully the new Religious Education Department materials will open up these areas in such a way that the church can grapple with its own conscience effectively.

10. He tried to keep a separation of church and state, and insisted on the essentiality of democratic principles in his various communities. That Joseph does not

always appear to consistently practice these is partially due to his definition of what constitutes "separation" and "democratic."

11. For an excellent discussion of these see Robert Bruce Flanders. **Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi** (University of Illinois Press; Urbana, Illinois, 1965), Chapters 8, 10, 11. Flanders does not condemn or condone these political ventures.

12. **The Saints' Herald**, Vol. 38 (Nov. 28, 1891), p. 757. The editors, including J. Smith III and R. S. Salyards, suggested only an even split might have prevented conflict.

13. **The Messenger**, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Feb. 1877), page 3.

14. **True Latter Day Saints' Herald**, Vol. 23, No. 17 (Sept. 1, 1876), p. 531; **The Saints' Herald**, Vol. 33, No. 26 (July 3, 1886), p. 402; Vol. 52, No. 44 (Nov. 1, 1905), p. 144. I will concentrate on the 19th century Reorganization's more explicitly political activities in this discussion.

15. **True Latter Day Saints' Herald**, Vol. 23, No. 22 (Nov. 15, 1876), p. 262. This was almost certainly Henry A. Stebbins.

16. **Doctrine and Covenants** (Herald Publishing House: Independence, Missouri, 1960).

17. **Decatur County Journal**, Vol. XVI, No. 21 (Oct. 18, 1883), Leon, Iowa.

18. **Ibid.**, Vol. XVI, No. 20, October 11, 1883 (Mismarked on title page as October 4.) In this period, 1875-1885, the Saints at Lamoni radically shifted their voting pattern six times. In all cases except one which couldn't be determined, the shift was for a Saint or proven friend of the church. Not all of the candidates were from Fayette (Lamoni) township and the bloc voting is confirmed by proportional shifts in Hamilton township (Pleasanton) where there were substantial numbers of church members.

19. In Iowa's 1882 temperance drive prohibition squeaked by in Decatur County with a majority of 203 votes out of 2477 cast. Lamoni voted 134 for prohibition, 29 against, a majority of 105! **Decatur County Journal**, Vol. XV, No. 6 (July 6, 1882.

20. **The Saints' Herald**, Vol. 35, No. 28 (July 14, 1888), p. 445. In the same letter Luff wrote: "How a Latter Day Saint can speak, or vote, in favor of open saloons, and then seek out some quiet place on this sacred spot (Independence) and pray, 'Lord hasten the redemption of Zion and the purification of the earth,' is a puzzle to us . . . Bah! I may be lacking in charity; but I have no place either in my head or heart for such imbecility or inconsistency. If God has any use or place for such Saints, let him have them, we don't need, or want them here."

21. **Decatur County Journal**, Vol. XV, No. 37 (Feb. 8, 1883); Vol. XVI, No. 19 (Oct. 4, 1883). **The Saints' Herald**, Vol. 29, No. 10 (May 15, 1882), p. 152; Vol. 32, No. 21 (May 23, 1885), p. 333; Vol. 33, No. 38 (Sept. 25, 1886), p. 593; Vol. 42, No. 47 (Nov. 20, 1895), pp. 744-745. Other references are common. Lamoni finally voted to incorporate in December 1884. In the Nov. 20, 1895 article the Saints were urged to "let alcoholic drinks and the places where such are trafficked in, severely alone — except insofar as they can help to suppress them."

22. **The Saints' Herald**, Vol. 31, No. 52 (Dec. 27, 1884), pp. 825-827; Vol. 33, No. 28 (July 17, 1886), p. 433. **The Messenger**, Vol. 2, No. 6 (April 1876), p. 21.

23. Visits were made in 1866 by Joseph Smith III and Elijah Banta, in 1882 by Z. H. Gurley, Jr. and E. L. Kelley, and in 1883 by Joseph Smith III and Gurley. Mention of these is made in numerous places. The **Journal of History**, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jan. 1908), p. 15 ff., contains a discussion of this and other church-state relations in "Iowa's Attitude Towards the Church," by Heman C. Smith.

24. Joseph Smith III, Letter Press Book I, (August 16, 1878), pp. 424-428. **Decatur County Journal**, Vol. 17, No. 25 (Nov. 13, 1884).

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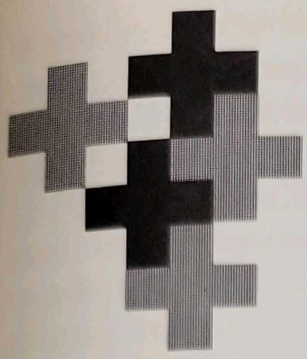


The 1970 World Conference:
Six Opinions

The editors of Courage *asked several people to write their reactions to the World Conference held in Independence, Missouri April 5-12, 1970. The following responses were received.*

Russell F. Ralston

My first reaction to the 1970 World Conference has to do with the manner in which the delegates, ex-officii, and visitors gathered. The church has been in some very obvious turmoil. This is true, perhaps, because we live in a world of turmoil. The church has been undergoing some definite change as it endeavors to relate to the rapid changes in the world about us. For many people this change has been too rapid and, in their thinking, it has brought the threat of apostasy. For others, the change has been too little, and too late. There are still others who recognize the need for change within the church but who question what that change should be.

The credibility gap between the ultraconservative and the ultra-liberal member is very real and has probably been increased by radical statements made and positions taken by people of both extremes. This was brought into focus by an extensive effort on the part of some well-meaning people who, through anonymous mailings, sought to discredit the church and its leadership because of so-called liberal tendencies. It was reported that this effort had so disturbed the basic faith of many people that a deep schism would develop during the conference. However, in spite of all this, the people gathered in good spirit and much of the negativism expressed prior to the conference seemed to be missing.

This good spirit continued throughout the conference and propositions advanced by either of the extremes were generally defeated. It appears that the "silent majority" was not to be swayed by either group. For example, efforts to curtail, or eliminate, the Religious Education Department as now constituted did not succeed. Moves from

the other extremes also failed. Answers to many of the pre-conference rumors came as their base was removed by questions from the floor that brought forthright answers from those who knew the facts. It is unfortunate that some sought to use cancelled checks that were over two years old to prove false implications for the present. Even the method used to obtain these checks points to a lack of Christian integrity on the part of a few. This was a low point in the conference, but it did not appear that many were influenced unduly.

It was notable that, even in the moments of greatest tension, the people maintained their sense of humor and could laugh. I believe that the ability of the conference to patiently endure an almost endless stream of procedural actions, to maintain a calm attitude of deliberation, and to hold to something of a "middle of the road" position, was due to the evident sincerity of all who assembled and to the tempering influence of the Good Spirit. Much credit must also be given to the members of the First Presidency, and President Smith particularly, for the leadership given throughout the conference period. I believe that their leadership was inspired and helped avoid the disaster that some had predicted.

There was a tendency on the part of some to press for a vote on matters that had implications that were not immediately evident. One such move would have had all elders' expenses paid from the tithes and offerings of the World Church. This, as appealing as it seems, would have forced a reduction in the appointee force that would have been difficult to justify.

Another was a move to reduce the entire budget by three per cent. This, too, seemed desirable and, in the view of present financial conditions, might have appeared to be wise. However, neither move was approved when the conference began to see some of the immediate effects.

The lively discussion and time required to pass the budget recommended by the Board of Appropriations indicated the concern of the people regarding church finances. The majority of the people sincerely felt that the church must economize wherever possible, but these same people were not willing to sustain the kind of cuts in the church program that would have resulted from most of the proposals. There was still the desire to have the entire matter studied again and a number of proposals were referred to the Presiding Bishopric and, in some instances, the First Presidency. I feel that the approval of the largest budget in the history of the church was an act of faith. At one point, it was suggested by someone that we sing "Faith of our Fathers." As needful as it was for the church to approve this large budget, it is even more needful for the church to put that faith into action if we are to succeed in raising the amount budgeted.

The provincialism of the church was evidenced in a number of ways. It has been several years since someone moved that we cease referring to

the church as the "General Church" and that we refer to it as the "World Church." The years have proved that it is much easier to change the name than the attitude. This is no less true of the more liberal thinkers than it is of the conservatives.

For example, in the discussion of standards of conduct, it appeared that a number of people were thinking only in terms of our judging other cultures. Some seemed to assume that we would be the ones doing the judging and wanted to preserve our right to do so. It would be interesting if some of the other cultures would judge our conduct on the basis of their culture. In one culture, anyone who uses tobacco is not classed as a "Christian" let alone being permitted membership in the church. In another culture, it is considered immoral for a young man to date a young woman prior to their marriage. In fact, many of the things we seem to more or less accept because of our cultural environment and background would be unacceptable to people of other cultures.

Our discussion of moral conduct (much of this was behind the scenes) indicated not only that we are provincial, but also that many of us have not discerned the meaning of the statement of Jesus in answer to criticism by the Pharisees of his day, in which he said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." It may be that, like the Pharisees of old, our concern for the law is sometimes greater than our concern for the man.

This provincialism was further indicated by a move to concentrate our youth ministry in giving leadership to the youth of America in helping them avoid participation in war. Apparently little — if any — consideration had been given to youth in other nations who have been and are affected as much as our own. Without speaking with undue criticism, but with realism, this sort of thing results only from the fact that we still basically think in terms of America and have not become very conscious of the rest of the world. This sort of thinking was further evidenced by some of our more liberal thinkers as they endeavored to commit the World Church and its funds to involvement in local situations and projects. It is easy for us to say that we must be the church wherever we are, but it is not so easy to follow the implications of the statement. Certainly, if we believe this, we must turn to the local churches to deal with social problems and be involved in social projects in their areas. A number of stakes are now engaged in such projects at their level. However, there is much more that needs to be done and will be done when each of us moves in Christian love to meet the needs of the many who live so near to us in our communities. This attempt of well-meaning people to focus the World Church funds and resources on a local situation, along with other things we have noted, are only symptoms of the America-centeredness of the concerns of many of us. I am convinced that as we truly become conscious of the world, its problems and potentials, that much of what we do in the church, financially and otherwise, will change.

This time must not be too far distant.

In conclusion, I would say that, in all probability, many of us were disappointed that some things did not happen which we would have liked to have happen. There are some areas of activity and involvement that we sense as real opportunities and potentials for the church as it moves forth as the Body of Christ. We can only hope that, as a church, we shall become more aware of these and be willing to move forward with Christ in all ways. However, overall, my reaction to the conference is one of gratitude for the blessings of God's leadership and the patient sincerity of the people who shared throughout the week. I pray that as we move on from this experience, we may be able to do so with increasing evidence of maturing faith. May we ever be open to the leadership of God's Spirit as we seek to minister to his people.

William S. Whenham

I submit these few considerations regarding the recent conference:

First of all, I feel we made a mistake in removing section 107 from our scriptures and placing it in a historical section or appendix. This may very well be a step toward removing it completely. There may be no official record of the church acting on its acceptance for its place in the *Doctrine and Covenants,* still, we can not deny its acceptance by the church through recognition in adherence.

Some apparently feel offended by three paragraphs (6, 10, 11) and thus feel justified in rejecting the other forty-three. The main objection raised on the conference floor was baptism for the dead. While two paragraphs recognize such a rite, this section does not command its practise, but to the contrary, it imposes bounds and restrictions. The actual practise was even brought to a halt during the life time of Joseph Smith, to wait upon the completion of the Nauvoo temple, which completion was never accomplished.

Other portions of this revelation lay the scriptural foundation on which the church has continued to build and stand. To cite a few examples: (1) The Council of Twelve is recognized as having a president. (2) Provision is made for the quorum of high priests to have a president with counselors. (3) The difference between the seventies and elders is clarified. (4) Instruction is given for printing the "new translation" or Inspired Version of the Bible. (5) The promise is given that the blessing of Joseph Smith would be upon the head of his posterity.

Members from some parts of the church seemed to come to conference with preconceived ideas about the members in the central stakes. This also happened in 1964 when the elders were put out of the conference. However, these preconditioned feelings seemed to mellow as the conference progressed and different poles of opinion became a little more discernible. In fact, the conference seemed to develop its own per-

sonality, expressing its own feeling, exerting its own direction, leading as much as being led. I feel the ultimate declaration of the conference was the intent to hold to scriptural restorationism.

During the week there were some expressions to the effect the church was ingrown because the conference refused to give our tithing to various and sundry organizations. While a few indulged their feelings against the assembly, a commendable attitude of tolerance seemed to prevail. The action and expression of the conference encouraged the exercise of individual agency in supporting activities felt worthwhile. It is not the function of the church to use the tithing of the world church and finance local, non-church groups and organizations regardless of how good the cause is felt to be. Perhaps a more significant area indicating a condition of becoming ingrown is manifest in the emphasis on the new office building. A number of men have been released from the mission field in an austerity program, while on the other hand large amounts of money are being allocated for this new building to facilitate expanding administration.

As one who feels deep personal investment in Christ's Church, I am concerned about our missionary outreach and zionic objective. I wonder if the events of the conference have brought a revitalizing encouragement causing the saints to realize the great importance of bringing souls into Christ in His church. If a question of confidence was engendered or the certainty of vision obscured, what will be the effect on income and baptisms?

Are we actually pursuing the strait way that will bring about the gathering of the saints, establishing life according to the order of God in the place appointed of God? Or have we become the sleeping virgins, everyone dreaming of building Zion in his own land according to his own culture so every man can walk in his own way after the image of his own mind?

Is our course going to lead us ahead in union to triumph over all things in Christ? Or will we be divided in the uncertainty of night wherein the opportunity for many to work will be passed because of the confusion of philosophies which cloud men's minds? Will our course lead us into a glorious day wherein is found the full beauty of life, or has it become a matter of keeping our balance in a turbulent time?

Of course questions are always easier to ask than answer and an increasing number come to mind, but perhaps some answers are not too far distant. The events which occur in the next few years and the conference interim should well prove to be of interest to all. We are truly living in the time of the end for many and a time of threshold of new opportunity for those who endure in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The growing polarity within the church was revealed both before and during the World Conference. Prior to the conference "underground" newspapers attacked the Church, vitriolic letters circulated among the membership, and conservatives interviewed and actively campaigned for delegates who were theologically "safe."

Upon arriving in Independence, many of the delegates encountered a barrage of irresponsible rumors as well as petty, small town gossip about liberal church leaders. They learned of personal abuse, malicious telephone calls, and alienation of the families of those holding liberal views by conservative members. Thus the conference delegates confronted the appalling sight of conservatives who in the name of a God of love sought to destroy their brothers.

Fortunately for the immediate future of the Church, the issues between liberals and conservatives were not sufficiently focused at the conference to create a direct encounter. Certain conservative delegates were inept in parliamentary procedure and inarticulate in expressing the issues. For example, attempts to cut the budget of the Department of Religious Education and the proposed twenty-five man censorship committee to control the new church school curriculum (approved by the Center Stake but ruled out of order at the Conference) are characterized more by emotion than intelligence.

The key issue underlying the conservative concern is the content of the new curriculum. But the curriculum has not yet been published. Various attempts by conservatives to control the curriculum in advance were sidetracked by a compromise hammered out between liberal, conservative, and moderate members of the High Priests' Quorum.

There are a number of distressing as well as hopeful trends revealed in the conference. The emotional antagonisms of certain conservatives are deep and bode further ill will. The resignation following the conference of the former director of the Department of Religious Education is likely to encourage the conservative extreme.

The danger emerges that vocal conservatives may achieve their goals simply by reason of the donnybrook which they raise, thereby forcing the leadership and conference to concentrate upon internal problem solving and discouraging leadership focus on long range objectives and reformulation of church policies which are essential to the future of the Church. In short, the conservative-liberal conflict may absorb so much of the energy of the Church as to defeat its outgoing missional objectives.

Equally disturbing is the appearance that conservatives may be more willing to expend of themselves for control of the Church than liberals. The conservative being ingroup oriented, sees a threat to his image of the Church as a threat to his total life and he responds accordingly. Many of the liberals see the Church as but one factor in a total

life style and being community oriented have encountered numerous ways to express Christian service. As such liberals become disgusted with squabbles within the Church, they drift away to other activities and leave the then static and dying structures to the conservative.

On the brighter side, the conference functioned effectively as a temporary tension relieving device. The fairness of the First Presidency in presiding ensured that a broad spectrum of opinion was heard. Conference debate and informal encounters provided a release valve for the frustration of extremists.

The conference revealed the power resident in the delegates to monitor the future policy of the Church. On numerous occasions the conference emphasized that it is its own boss, which is not to distract from the power of the First Presidency to formulate policy recommendations and to affect the vote on the floor of the Conference.

Future conferences are likely to become the focal point of tensions between the extremes. Astute leadership combined with responsiveness of a large body of moderate delegates willing to function in an orderly manner should enable the conference to work through the problems engendered by polarity. Under such circumstances, the tensions of polarity may result in deeper study, more intelligent articulation of the issue, and shared decision making resulting in a more meaningful course for the church of the future.

William L. Raiser

A World Conference is a complex happening, its success or failure measured not so much in terms of the success or failure of the parts as by the fit or integration of the whole. By the latter measure, the 1970 World Conference failed.

Many individuals and groups within the body of the Church came to the conference with fearful anticipation. In the months preceding, there had been much talk of polarization and possible schism. Dissent and confusion were the order of the day. And concern over this manifest condition of unrest was clearly evident in the opening sessions with the reading of the report of the First Presidency and President Smith's sermon of Sunday evening. However, even with the accurate appraisal of the situation and the evident concern of the leadership, the conference was poorly organized to meet the needs of the hour.

The channels of communication between those under the dome and the membership at large were circuitous and only partially open. When there is a perceived inadequacy in the flow of information and dialogue throughout the organizational structure, rumor and innuendo take over. The saints came from all corners of the Church and world hoping to get at the heart of the problem and were frustrated in the process. The "dialogue" sessions were merely innocuous reports of innocuous com-

mittees and commissions, inappropriate for the time with the single exception of the report from the Department of Religious Education. At last an issue out in the open! But not really, and that leads to a consideration of the second major deficiency of the conference.

The delegates were admonished early that Christian dissent required an examination of the issues and not an attack upon an individual. In theory this is a laudable statement, but the organization of the conference did not facilitate its practice. The issues which lay at the heart of the dissent and polarization — the religious education curriculum, the distribution of ministerial personnel among administrative and field assignments, and the educational requirements for ministerial personnel — were in the realm of administrative prerogative and, therefore, not the domain of the conference. Because of this, issues became focused in particular individuals whom the conference could get at by sustaining or failing to sustain, and legislative issues directly or secondarily related to the underlying issues, e.g. the proposal by the Commission on Higher Education and the budget were picked over and argued at great length.

A classic example of the difficulties and frustrations encountered came in the discussion of the budget. A significant group of the delegates did not want to provide money to pay for theological training but did want to increase the number of men in the field. However, these desires worked at cross purposes. The first required that the budget item for elders' expenses be decreased and the second required that the same item be increased. There was no way to win. Frustration was the end result here as elsewhere.

Both of the above indicate a third problem of the conference – the direct relationship between size of the body and time required for deliberation and debate. The larger the size of the body, the greater the amount of time required to arrive at a consensus. The large size of the conference body and the degree of dissent present at the outset indicated that inadequate time was available to accomplish the task of arriving at a common consensus or base from which to move out in a positive fashion.

These are the major reasons why I think that the conference was, in large part, a failure. The Church today does not operate as the body to which Paul likened it. The members thereof are not rightly fitted together. The conference was successful in averting a major splitting of the body; but while the internal tensions were dampened, they were not satisfactorily resolved so the Church might be marked by the degree of unity of purpose so necessary to its missional endeavor.

William D. Russell

In my view the main issue of the 1970 World Conference, and the central issue in the church right now, is the question as to whether we are

to continue to hold a narrow attitude toward other Christian denominations. Many church members believe that ours is "the true church" and that we have nothing to gain from contact with other Christian denominations, and most especially, that we have nothing to learn from theologians of other faiths. "These other schools have nothing to teach us," stated one delegate at Monday's business session, referring no doubt to the fact that our leaders have had discussions with faculty members of Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City.

It appears that the leadership of the church is moving away from this narrow attitude. At conference it seemed clear that the primary center of opposition to this more liberal position came from the delegates in Center and Santa Fe Stakes. The First Presidency came out strongly in support of the Department of Religious Education, which is the main center of controversy due to the fact that it has moved away from the narrow approach to other Christian communions. Probably because of the Presidency's support, the majority of the delegates, especially those not from Independence, refused to support those who wanted to punish the Department of Religious Education, whether by cutting its budget, or by refusing to sustain its leadership.

Thus it would appear that the conference refused to turn back the clock. That is, the delegates refused to support those elements in the church who would have us return to our more narrow ways of yesterday. However, while the progressives appeared to defeat the traditionalists, it is very possible that appearances at conference could be deceiving. It is possible that the Department of Religious Education "won" only because they had the backing of the Presidency rather than because the delegates really are convinced the department deserves our support. If this is the case, it is very possible that the proposed curriculum will be toned down drastically to avert further opposition from the ultra-conservatives of the church. In other words, the First Presidency could very well read the attitude of the conference as having been: "We'll support you now, but if that curriculum turns out to be other than traditional Latter Day Saintism, you will have our support no longer."

Even if the hierarchy does believe the mass of people in the church is genuinely supportive, it is very possible that they will hazard very little in the way of innovative leadership in the next few years, simply for fear of receiving the kind of backlash which the proposed new curriculum has received.

It is also possible that the traditionalists actually won, despite appearances, by helping produce the resignations of a few key leaders. Individuals who have the ability and the opportunity to serve their fellowmen in a number of capacities quite naturally begin to consider other avenues of service when they see self-proclaimed defenders of "Christ's true gospel" vilify them, calling them heretics, even communists. They can easily wonder what kind of Christ is worshipped by

people who shout them down, steal letters and checks, spread false rumors about them, and harass them with anonymous phone calls and garbage on their lawn. When conscientious labors receive such actions in return, it is no wonder that some of our full time ministers have opted for other avenues of service, in locations not beset with the ill-will toward them which is now so prevalent among powerful elements of the church in Independence.

On the other hand, it is very possible that the church can continue to move in the direction favored by the progressives. If the leadership continues to move forward, refusing to let the traditionalists intimidate them, it is very possible that the opposition will decrease in years to come. The traditionalists raised quite a storm in the months prior to the recent conference. Perhaps the extreme and un-Christian tactics used by a few of them, as well as the overly narrow minded view (with regard to other Christians) held by most of them have succeeded in making it clear to the majority of saints that we cannot turn back the clock and return to an earlier day when we liked to think we had a corner on the truth.

During the conference the ultra-conservative delegates from some of the Central Stakes kept asking questions as to whether any church money was going to tuition for theological study, or to Saint Paul School of Theology, or to Dr. W. Paul Jones of the Saint Paul faculty. At one point President Draper and Bishop Johnson answered questions in this regard. Draper and Johnson said they could not recall any payments to Dr. Jones, but they did mention that a check was sent to the school for services rendered by Dr. Jones and two of his faculty colleagues. When later in the week it was discovered that a check actually had been made out to Dr. Jones, Draper and Johnson made statements explaining that they had forgotten the particular situation in which Dr. Jones had been paid for his assistance. Their explanations were candid and very credible. I suspect very few delegates doubted the credibility of their statements. Yet when talking with one of the leaders of the anti-administration forces in the Center Stake delegation about three days after conference, I asked this individual what he thought of the explanations given by Draper and Johnson. "They simply got caught in a bold faced lie," was his reply. To me the most unfortunate thing about this whole controversy is the fact that the integrity of these two men was impugned in this manner. I do not doubt their integrity in the slightest. I hope this elder reflects an extremely small percentage of those who attended conference.

As a graduate of Saint Paul School of Theology, and as one who had a class under Dr. Jones, I was saddened to see the school and Dr. Jones attacked by delegates who probably know little about the purposes of the school and what goes on there, and who probably know little about Dr. Jones. I'm sure if I were asked to list the twelve finest Christians I've known, several of the twelve would be faculty members at St. Paul School of Theology.

Perhaps the most regrettable thing about conference was the fact that, probably due to the concern about the curriculum and theological education in the church, nothing of importance was accomplished in the area of social concerns. It was very unfortunate that a church which needs so badly to turn its attention outward to the needs of the world became so involved with internal problems that it failed to witness in the sphere of social concerns. If and when the church moves more directly toward dedicating a sizeable portion of its energies and resources in this field, once again it will not be without significant opposition.

Barney R. Fuller

In recent years I have attended several conferences and assemblies of higher education. I have observed their format, their methods, their procedures and objectives. These conferences were very well planned and ordered. They were so well planned that most often new business was frowned upon, and any challenge to their set schemes most certainly would be denied. All across America today — in all types of organizations — there are the dominating few in high places who hold their members at bay with administrative control while carefully leading them through a well designed plan of indoctrination.

This method of force and control over the minds of men is rapidly becoming the organizational structure of America.

The 1970 World Conference of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was basically in its design, execution and format just another political conference on higher education which one could attend in almost any state in the union.

In the first few meetings at the conference the whole plan of operation had become obvious. I had seen it many times before. How saddening it was to see the conference of the RLDS Church being ordered by the same control tactics used by the organizations of the World. One is deeply grieved in his spirit when he sees his own Church leaders stoop to use the selfish and prideful practices of fallen man.

A few years ago I worked with one of the large industries in this country. When meetings were held, the dollar was always the prime object. That was about the size of it at the 1970 World Conference. The dollar was by far the dominating issue. Any time a people loses the Spirit, materialistic programs and incentives will move into priority.

The whole conference was carefully directed to accomplish three basic objectives of the Administration: (1) to avoid and not permit open discussion on the real problems of the church; (2) to get the budget approved as they had drawn it up; (3) to further re-orientate the church toward "worldly secular" education.

It was again sad to observe how the Administration went about ac-

complishing the above objectives. The conference was absent of the Spirit to serve its people. It did not seek to give full and wholesome expression to its members. There was no out reaching concern for the many who sought to know why certain things were going on in the Church. For the most part ambiguous answers were given to the few questions which were permitted to be raised.

I witnessed a conference divided, blinded, frustrated, and very, very sick — one void of the demonstration of the power and spirit of Almighty God. I saw a needy people gathered for a needy blessing from heaven, which could not come.

It was a conference which was desperately needing a new cleansing, deep repentance, a Baptism in the Holy Ghost, and a new vision of God's Will for today; a conference concerned with materialistic programs and hours of labor spent to initiate them, rather than hours of prayer and fasting to seek the will and mind of God so that He may initiate His programs in and through us that we might together work the works of God.

Hours and hours were spent on plans and programs to educate our people, and yet, I witnessed not once an effort to lead our people to "tarry ye until ye be endowed with power from on high."

There was a great assembly of our people desperately needing to be filled with the power and spirit of the living God, many hungry for such an experience, but I saw the saints led toward the "tree of knowledge" and away from the "tree of life." Yes, actually led away from the Saviour of the World: led from Him who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the light . . ."; led away from the Word of God toward the philosophy of the world; led away from Him who said, "I will baptize you with fire and the Holy Ghost. . . . And when the Holy Ghost is come He will testify of me . . . . He will teach you all things . . . . He will bring all things to your remembrance which I have taught you . . . . He will show you things to come."

It was a conference needing so badly to drink from the fountain of living water, to taste of the joy and power of the Living God, to enter into the life of faith and begin to walk in the Spirit.

When I was an unbelieving liberal, I would have shouted, "The 1970 conference was great. We are on the road to success." But since I met Jesus, and He filled me with His Glorious Spirit and took the scales from my eyes, I was able by the power of His indwelling Spirit to see and know that the 1970 conference was a spiritual failure and was heading down the broad road of darkness and destruction.

It was a conference which didn't need to talk about money, social programs, and seminary training, but one which needed to get right with God; one which needed to learn again (or perhaps for the first time enter in upon) the glorious education of the first principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was a conference needing to be taught how to receive the

faith, knowledge, wisdom, love, gifts, and blessings of the Holy Spirit; a people needing to be born again, and in unwavering faith lay hold upon the "rod of iron" and be delivered from the powers of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's Son.

At the 1970 World Conference I could hear a loud knock on the outside door of the great Auditorium and a voice crying, "Behold I stand at the door and knock, and if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

I saw a conference which had locked Jesus on the outside and would not permit that he enter in. The people were desperately needing to fall at the feet of Jesus and to worship him, love him, receive him and obey him, and preach him as did the apostle Paul:

> And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (I Cor. 2:1-5)

My prayers for the Church are for revival, for a new visitation of God to each member; a humility that will let us lay our intellectual crowns down at the feet of Jesus; a faith born of the Spirit of God to live in our minds and hearts; and for a restoration of the glorious Gifts of the Holy Ghost, that we as a people can come alive to enjoy the rights and privileges that are ours in the Family of God.

Finally, in order that we will be spiritually prepared with divine power to go forth and bestow a genuine blessing of Jesus upon all who will open their hearts and lives to receive. To this end may God live among His people, leading us into a living sacrifice of His Holy Will so that we will be ready to pass the test of His Coming.

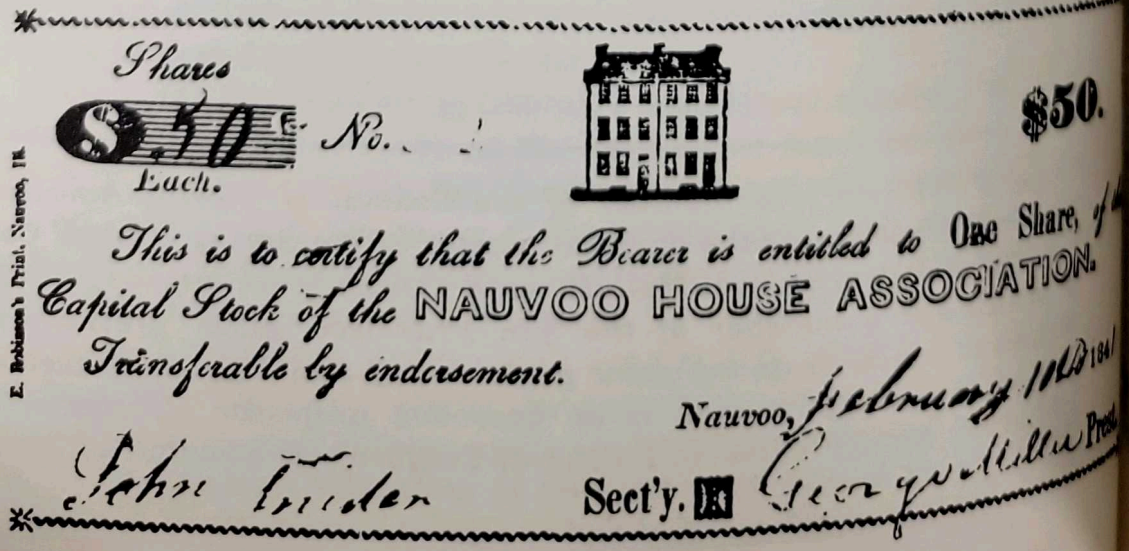
Russell F. Ralston is a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles; William S. Whenham is the assistant pastor of the Spring Branch Congregation in Independence, Mo.; Howard Downs is an attorney in San Francisco and a member of the San Francisco stake presidency; William L. Raiser is an assistant professor of sociology at Graceland College; William D. Russell is an associate professor of religion at Graceland; Barney Fuller of LaHabra, California is co-editor of Zion's Warning.

DOCUMENTS

In what is known as Section 107 of the *Book of Doctrine and Covenants*, RLDS edition (Section 124, LDS edition), Joseph Smith, Jr. instructed the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to erect two buildings in Nauvoo, Illinois. The first, the Nauvoo House, was to be a grand hotel and residence for the Joseph Smith family. The second, a temple, was to be a house for conducting the ordinances of the Lord. While the "revelation" was presented to the church in January 1841, the building projects had been adopted before then since excavation work for the temple began in the fall of 1840, and a bill to charter the Nauvoo House Association was then before the Illinois Legislature.* Section 107:19a,b reads:

> Behold, verily I say unto you, Let my servant George Miller, and my servant Lyman Wight, and my servant John Snider, and my servant Peter Haws, organize themselves, and appoint one of them to be a president over their quorum for the purpose of building that house. And they shall form a constitution whereby they may receive stock for the building of that house.

Reproduced below are two documents associated with the NauvooTemple and the Nauvoo House. One is a certificate issued to Peter Haws authorizing him to collect funds for the two projects. The other is a stock certificate from the Nauvoo House Association, bearing the signatures of George Miller and John Snider.



To whom it may concern This certifies that the bearer Peter Haws, has been called by revelation, and sanctioned by the council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints is a legally authorised agent to collect funds for the Nauvoo House and the Temple* of the now erecting in the city of Nauvoo; and as such is recommended to the cordial reception and faithful observance of all Saints Confident that he will honor his mission. It is to be hoped that the Saints will open their hearts and honor the servants of God by heeding his teachings and obeying the commandments of the Lord in all things both Spiritual and temporal. And may health peace and the love of God the Father and the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord be and abide with him and you all is the prayer of

Your devoted brother in the bonds of the everlasting Gospel

City of Nauvoo
May 21st 1841

Used by permission. Department of History, The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri.

*For a comprehensive study of the Nauvoo House and Nauvoo Temple projects see "A Dwelling for Man and a Dwelling for God," chapter 7 in Robert Bruce Flanders' **Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi**, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1965.

EDITORIALS

What Kind of Love?

People talk of love, they write about it, they sing of it, they go through motions to suggest it on stage and screen, and now it seems "the right thing" is to preach about it.

"To the pure all things are pure," as Titus wrote, is often used defensively and sometimes deceptively. The Inspired Version does not make this a categorical assertion. It says, "Unto the pure, let all things be pure . . . ." (Titus 1:15)

Recently a wise and faithful elder said to me, "This **love ethic**, that we've heard so much about from our pulpits recently, doesn't do much to help me in today's world." We agree with the song "Love, sweet love . . . is one thing the world is in need of." But like "home," "mother," and "God," it is easy to preach about these and permit people to go away as empty as they came.

Why or how do we beget love in our hearts? Love cannot be demanded or commanded. It is easy to love those who love us, but loving the unlovely requires a lot of understanding, discipline, and doing.

In the volumes being written in the daily papers and magazines about the generation gap, we often read of the youth who are socially experimenting and advocating tearing down the established social norms, who blame the homes without love and the hypocrisy of marriage. This is basically a conflict between idealism and reality. It is so easy to pick out the flaws in others and tell about them in a tone of voice which sounds as though we meant, "Of course, I would never do that."

Arthur Phelps once wrote, "It is better in some respects to be admired by those with whom you live than to be loved by them; and this is not on account of any gratification of vanity, but because admiration is more tolerant than love."

Love frequently gets possessive and dominant. Admiration keeps its distance and avoids such conflicts. One does not love an idea, but he can admire its implications. One of the most abused words in our common language is this beautiful word "love." Yet, when it is used by the generation in revolt against the social order, it often gets dragged through the mud. The same degradation occurs in the modern novel and stage.

Paul declared that "love is the fulfilling of the law." All other commands are swallowed up in these: "Love . . . God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbor as thyself." This can be done, but seldom is. Sermons which treat this basic emotion philosophically are scarcely able to change the heart. A Restoration command, "Say nothing but repentance unto this generation" (**Doctrine and Covenants** 10:4b), may still be an effective and saving measure.

Our respect and admiration is usually attached to people, principles, and institutions, but seldom to abstract ideas. Jesus declared in the start of his ministry, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:13). The Kingdom of God is people working to change the ways of men to the ways of God. When those attracted to the church obey its ordinances, they will be directed to the higher road which leads to the love of God and neighbor. "In ordinances thereof (the gospel) the power of godliness is manifest; and without the ordinances thereof and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh: for without this, no man can see the face of God, even the Father and live" (D & C 83:3c).

It seems obvious that a Restoration

sermon must have a broader base than an exhortation to love the Lord Jesus. While this is the ultimate Gospel ethic, it is only one aspect or ingredient. God would not have bothered to bring into existence the priesthood and the angel message in these latter days if the needs of mankind had already been met by the message and priesthood already being given to the world.

The 1970 **Pastor's Handbook** (p. 65) has an ambiguous and subtle sentence: "The gospel, reduced to its most simple terms is, 'God is love.' " That is much too simple. It fails to represent the teachings of Jesus about priesthood, stewardship, organization, glories of life eternal, Zion, and others. God's love is our basic motivation, but not the whole gospel. That the "gospel is love" is a generalization. But as Disraeli once wrote, "No generalization is true, not even this one."

Think not that I am against a fellowship of love. But it should be according to the pattern given, "He that prayeth whose spirit is contrite, the same is accepted of me, if he obey mine ordinances" (D & C 52:4c). Of course, the world needs more love; we all want to be loved; it boosts our ego. But a more profound experience comes to one when he can pour out his affection deeply and truly. Only then can he appreciate the love of Christ. Truly, it is more blessed to love than to be loved.

Howard Downs put it very well: "We surround ourselves with things, since they feed our pride and cannot reject us as do persons. Though God made people to love, and things to use, we reverse the relationship. We love things and use people, treating them as objects and means in order to magnify ourselves. We pretend we are more than we are, and thus become liars to ourselves and to the world" (**Saint's Herald**, September 15, 1963).

I have felt impelled to give a warning against high sounding rhetoric and vacuous sermons which fail to get down to where the people live. As Henry Drummond wrote in his classical work, I believe that love is "The greatest thing in the world." But, paraphrasing a later writer, "Everybody talking about love is not practicing it."

Chris B. Hartshorn

Keeping Campuses Open

Early in the summer the American Council on Education called a meeting in Washington of leaders of all the associations in higher education. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss steps that would enable colleges to open — and stay open — in the fall. This meeting and others like it in recent weeks have reflected a growing concern that the violent events of last spring may be repeated this fall.

Washington, where I live, was the scene of several college protests last spring. There are five major universities in the metropolitan area. None was exempt from disruptions.

For example, some University of Maryland students and faculty went on strike, protesting enlargement of the war in Indochina. A mass rally on the central quad was attended by about 7,000 persons. Some were there out of sincere concern. Some were there for the sensation of involvement. Some were there simply to witness the phenomenon.

The oratory seemed confusing. One speaker advocated "closing down" the university for the remainder of the semester by strike. Another demanded "opening up" the university for the free flow of ideas.

The references to the strike sometimes had different meanings. Some speakers calling for a strike meant a class boycott to focus attention on discussion of the war. Others, and they were the minority, meant to close the university completely for the remainder of the semester. I thought of the scriptural question about who will respond to an uncertain trumpet call. The crowd was ready to respond, but the call to action was not clear. Perhaps this was fortunate.

At one point the line of police and National Guard which had spread tear gas the evening before reappeared at the other end of the mall. The speaker who held the microphone at the time cried, "There are the pigs!" and pointed. I saw the crowd rise up as one and turn to look. For an instant the situation was made for a demagogue. A sentence could have started a stampede. The earlier tragedy at Kent University could have been repeated.

There were several days of mass meetings, discussions, and confrontations. At least three young RLDS churchmen on the faculty were involved in earnest discussions of the issues with students and colleagues. And one served in the "green armband" faculty group that worked as a buffer between students and police to avoid violent confrontations. Finally university officials said Maryland would close until further notice. But later a mass meeting of students and faculty who wanted the university to remain open prevailed and classes were continued for those who wished to attend.

Then came the Washington demonstration of May 9. Several of the speakers at the huge rally on the ellipse behind the White House urged more campus strikes. Again, some of the speakers meant to close universities totally. And these speakers advocated that such campus strikes should be followed by strikes in factories, offices, and military ranks. The model would be the general strikes that have helped to change government policies in other countries, like France.

This fall the war will still be an issue. And there are other issues, such as civil rights, poverty, and ecology, that demand attention when students and teachers are together. As students return to campuses, more disruptions may be expected. More calls for strikes are likely to be heard.

And calls for closing some campuses may be heard from the public. Colleges have become places of learning in ways that make some citizens off campus very uncomfortable. The learning of historical trends and chemical formulas and rules of rhetoric have been joined with the learning of political tactics. Sometimes the tactics are awkward and ineffective, even counter-productive. But learning is happening, as long as the campuses are open.

One of the most counter-productive tactics some campus dissenters have developed is the notion of entirely closing the colleges by student and faculty strikes. What this will win is uncertain. What it will lose is clear. A college that is completely closed is a forum where discussion and learning have stopped. There can be no winners in such a movement and student and faculty members in the various college communities should oppose such demands.

Roger Hunsinger

The Deepening National Sickness

Last spring, shocked by the Kent State tragedy, I started a new file that was hastily labeled "Student Dissent: The Kent State Four and After."

I am condemned a racist by that file.

It took a column by Carl T. Rowan, written several days after the Kent State incident, to convince me. Rowans explains: "I said the Kent State tragedy was only the beginning of more serious repressions. I erred, for Kent State was not the beginning. On February 8, 1968, three youths were shot to death and at least 34 persons were wounded when police fired on demonstrators at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg."

The "Orangeburg Three" were black.

Not long after the Kent State disaster, six blacks were killed, reportedly by police, in Augusta, Georgia. In neither of these situations, one before Kent and one after, did the public hue and cry come near to the hysteric proportions that followed the slaying of the four white students.

Carl Rowan termed this double standard one aspect of the "deepening national sickness." The allegation is hard to refute. I, for one, agree with Rowan. I am appalled by my own racism.

But this is only part of the sickness. The sickness is not racism, but the psychological and sociological conditions which allow racism to develop. There must be something radically wrong with a society that relatively ignores black murders but is radically offended by white tragedy.

Consider the following:

Mississippi highway patrolmen killed two Jackson State students and wounded nine others attempting to quell a student disturbance. Why did the state patrol get involved when National Guardsmen and town police were already at the scene? Why, when these trained police officers claim to have been shot at from a roof top, did they fire into an unarmed crowd of students?

A Chicago grand jury decided, months after the incident and the ensuing publicity, that police fired a barrage of shots into an apartment where Fred Hampton and other black panthers were sleeping. The Black Panthers have a reputation for violence. But who was violent that day?

Add to this the above-mentioned Augusta, Georgia and Orangeburg, South Carolina stories and ask the question: If America is a sick society, then just which Americans are sick? The realization comes, slowly at first, and then overwhelms in its indictment. It took a black columnist to painfully remind me that somebody had indeed erred and that an entire nation was racist. Repression did not begin at Kent State. Repression did not even begin at Augusta, Georgia. In fact, when, in our land, have blacks not known the simultaneous outrage oppression and repression?

The agony of whites over Kent State was the agony of white liberal America regarding the spear, for once, in its own side. It was the agony, to change the metaphor, of a society that shockingly began to see the cancer destroying its own body — an agony made all the more painful because of the gnawing awareness that other cancers, at other times, and less personally destructive, have been blithely ignored.

Americans have ignored the cancer of war. We have ignored the cancer of racism. We have ignored the cancer of poverty. But we have been ignoring our own disease. The cancer has turned from its ravage of organ and limb and is now attacking the main

body. Camus' "plague" is well upon us. It may be too late.

At this stage, then, when awareness of the damning consequences of our own ignorance becomes precise, a new perspective emerges. Speaking personally, I can no longer stand in judgment of "panthers" who arm for defense, or of blacks who "lose their cool" when called "nigger," or of militants who burn ghetto buildings in a rage of frustration. They are fighting the cancer of racism and when I condemn them I condemn myself.

By the same token, I can no longer stand in judgment of students, whether at Kent State or at Kansas State, whether white or black, who want to "close the university," or of those who want to "burn the university," or of those who want to have finals dismissed so they can "go to Washington and lobby against the war." They too, I must confess, are fighting the deeper social cancer that causes war and allows continuing injustice.

As this academic year begins, I can begin to understand the commitment and the passion of a young man from the University of Kansas. In the wake of the Kent State tragedy, when white America was in the midst of its agonizing self-appraisal, and college after college was striking or closing down to either protest the war effort or to avoid being burned down, this young man, along with other radicals, advocated that the University of Kansas implement a universal strike.

The chancellor, however, convinced him to support a plan which allowed the students to choose their level of participation, ranging from attendance at all classes and finals, to immediate boycott of all classes and finals. This student's comments, made last spring, hopefully offer keen insight into the motivations of many of those who consider such broadgauged proposals as "close down the campus," or the disruption of "business as usual" on many levels — academic, economic, and political — and may carry considerable value in understanding the campus pulse this fall.

The young man, newly elected student government president at Kansas, commented that he was willing to support the chancellor's proposal, but that "if by September the insanity of killing and expansion of war into Cambodia and all of Southeast Asia is still with us, then I will see that alternatives to the 'business as usual' operation of the university are provided until Richard Nixon and the mentality which he represents will clearly see that the faculty, administration and students mean it when they say this damned war has got to end."

Those in this country who are appalled by riots, by student demonstrations, by the burning of ghetto and ROTC buildings, and who are willing to ignore the slaughter and subsequent anger of blacks, and who fail to comprehend the commitment and prophetic thrust of such young men from Kansas, must yet be aroused to a sense of increasing personal responsibility for what is taking place.

The events which daily sadden us and cause us to shake our heads in despair will continue to happen until the situations causing them are removed. Black militants have chosen to die in order to change things. Students are making the same decision. When we fully understand that the cancer is with us, then and only then will we be able to move effectively to remove the underlying causes.

But beware.

There is a profound danger in coming to such an understanding. At present, the church, the state police, the National Guard, the hard hats, the President of the United States, a majority of both the House and Senate, apple pie and motherhood, ad **infinitum**, will not be on our side. Quite frankly, that scares me.

Joe Pearson

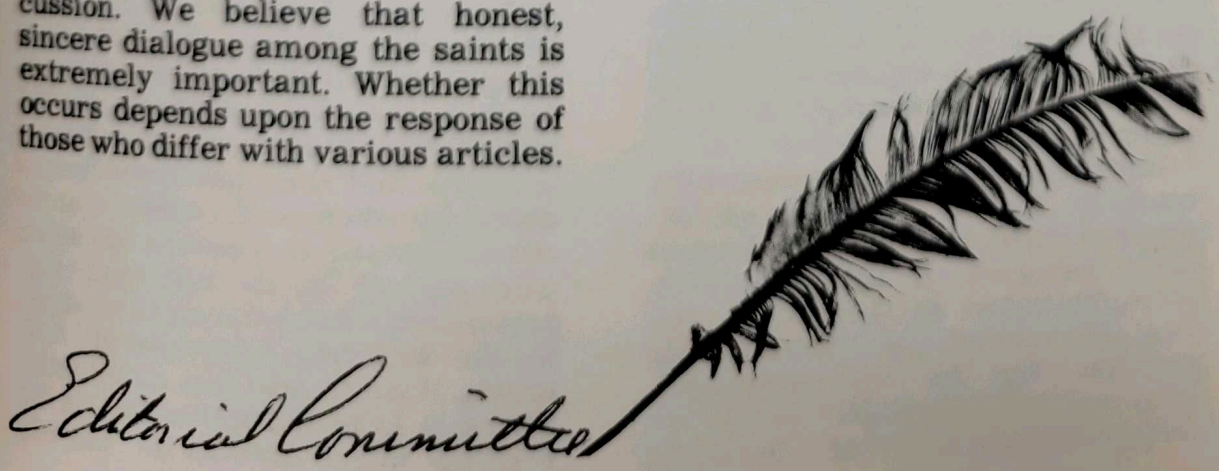
In Search of Critics

We are pleased with the reception which the April pilot issue of Courage received. Many people have wished us well. We are especially grateful to those who have subscribed, and or contributed financially to the launching of this new journal.

As we prepare this issue for the press, we have not received any really critical mail. This is unfortunate because there were several articles in the pilot issue which took positions either to the left or to the right of most church members. We had hoped to print, in this issue, letters or articles challenging positions taken in the first issue. Unfortunately, our mail has been almost entirely favorable. We are quite eager to publish alternative positions on the issues that are discussed in Courage and we have tried hard to secure articles from people who we know differ from most of the editors. We selected members of our Advisory Board from as wide a variety of backgrounds and perspectives as possible. Their role is to scrutinize articles submitted to Courage, evaluating their worthiness for publication. They are also involved in suggesting editorial policy, recommending articles and authors that we should seek out, and occasionally writing articles, editorials, letters, or reviews themselves. Thus, even the editorial section of Courage will not contain one consistent point of view, because we will have a wide variety of writers.

We are determined to make Courage a means for frank discussion. We believe that honest, sincere dialogue among the saints is extremely important. Whether this occurs depends upon the response of those who differ with various articles.

Chris B. Hartshorn of Independence, Missouri is a former editor of the Saints' Herald; Roger Yarrington, also a former Saints' Herald editor, is currently the Director of Publications for the American Association of Junior Colleges in Washington, D. C.; Joseph H. Pearson is a former editor of Stride, and is now the Acting Director of Campus Ministry for the RLDS Church.



Editorial Committee

Insights Into the Book of Revelation: As Illuminated by the Book of Mormon. By George A. Njeim. (Published privately by the author and available for purchase at Herald Publishing House, Independence, Missouri, 247 pp., $5.95.)

George Njeim's **Insights into the Book of Revelation**, apparently written as an adult study text, although it is not in any way sponsored by the Department of Religious Education as curriculum material nor in any way endorsed by the First Presidency as editors in chief of the church's publishing house, is the first and only book written by a member of the RLDS Church exclusively treating this New Testament Apocalypse.

While many will insist the Book of Revelation must be accepted on faith, scholarly consideration ought to be included. While a book such as this certainly ought to involve the author's own thought and interpretation, it should also examine and incorporate the research and scholarship of competent scholars in the field. The book does not indicate the author's willingness to do so. Writing entirely out of the context of his own interpretations, Njeim makes little or no attempt to test out his largely indefensible hypotheses against the findings of New Testament scholars. For this and other obvious reasons, the book emerges not as an example of Restoration scholarship, but as merely another attempt at 19th century apologetics.

The book, which is reasonably readable, moves along at an acceptable pace. The author assumes some plausible, if not defensible, interpretations. At points an acceptable level of scholarship emerges. But for the most part, genuine scholarship, even an acknowledgement of existing scholarship on the subject, is lacking. In its place the author has resorted to questionable interpretations and conjecture. He either does not know or deliberately has chosen to ignore the findings of many scholars who almost to a man insist that the Book of Revelation remains a "closed" book. Few scholars of competence will attempt to explain authoritatively the garbled mass of symbols and images.

The author's rather dogmatic interpretations, usually yielding to the traditional interpretations developed in more conservative RLDS circles, also tend to weaken the book. Unsupported assumptions are frequently made with a rather persistent mixing of symbolic and non-symbolic conclusions. Because he accepts the traditional view of the "apostacy" of the early Christian Church and the rising of the Roman Catholic Church, and uses this as a mold for shaping his interpretations, Njeim's objectivity appears to be compromised.

Again, contrary to much of modern scholarship, the author appears to use the Apocalypse as a vehicle for predicting many "future" events. Here again he appears to have not been exposed to much of modern scholarship which insists that the Apocalypse was addressed to church members of the A.D. 90-100 period. These were they who were able to understand the purpose of the book, its veiled illusions to the contemporary situation, and its polemic against the state religion of the period. Most modern scholars accept the view that the Apocalypse was a coded message to the church in its current crisis, to nerve it to stand courageously in its trial and persecution. It was an elaborate message to the suffering churches of Asia urging them to hold fast to the faith. There is little indication that in its original intent it was to have a

broader application. Since it is generally agreed that an apocalyptic work is valid and meaningful only as it illuminates the age in which it is written and when its code can be "broken" by the faithful, it can only involve considerable strain when a broader scope is given.

Therefore, I call into question much of the author's attempt to stretch the application of the Apocalypse beyond the first century A.D., down through history, culminating (as the author insists) in the "restoration" of the church in the nineteenth century.

The persistent problem of the authorship of the Book of Revelation is easily disposed of by Njeim in asserting that "the authorship of the book has never been seriously doubted, and goes back to the Apostle John, the writer of the fourth gospel" (p. 13). Despite his appeal to the **Book of Mormon**, Njeim appears to be unaware of the fact that most scholars today do seriously doubt that the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation. While the fourth gospel was written in excellent Greek, the language of the Apocalypse was poor and often grammatically incorrect. There are also important theological differences in these two New Testament books supposedly written by the Apostle John. Thus the same person could hardly have written both books. Ignored also is the fact that the Book of Revelation encountered considerable difficulty in its canonization. This would not be the case if the apostolicity of the book was as well established as Njeim insists, for the New Testament consists precisely of those books which the early Christian church thought were written by apostles or close associates as in the case of Mark and Luke-Acts.

Probably one of the weakest elements of the book is the author's attempt to utilize the **Book of Mormon** as "illumination" for the book. Notwithstanding his reference to the **Book of Mormon** (p. 90) as instrumental in lifting the mystery, I see no sense in which the Book of Revelation has been clarified or deciphered thereby. Scholars are generally agreed that most of the symbolic meaning is still lost to us. Njeim, however, with apparent ease applies many of the elements of the book to the specific view of the "Restored" church. The "illumination" supplied by the **Book of Mormon** is claimed but not explained in the work. The symbolic language is made to serve the author's view of the meaning of the prophecy and its application to the history of the church. Therefore, despite his subtitle and his dogmatic statement on page 16, the author fails to indicate just how the **Book of Mormon** illuminates the Book of Revelation, and how they "complement each other and have the same end in mind, namely: to the convincing of mankind that Jesus is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and Christ, the eternal God." The author (p. 154) emphatically asserts that Joseph Smith's vision in the grove, the publication of the **Book of Mormon**, the restoring of the church, in fact the whole range of the history of the Mormon movement, are part of the orderly unfolding of the fulfillment of the prophecy in the Revelation of John.

The author spends considerable time attempting to prove that while other aspects of the Book of Revelation are largely symbolic, the recorded flight of an angel to earth (14:6) is a literal event. He never clarifies why he is justified in literalizing this flight while assuming a similar earth-bound flight (10:1) is not to be treated in the same way.

While he usually assumes the language of the book is symbolic, yet under the pressure of the traditional Latter Day Saint view, he lifts chapter 14 to the literal level. I commend his courage in doing so, but I question his justification.

The author also weakens his work when he appropriates at least some of the "celestial mathematics" (pp. 104 ff) that has often been extracted from the book. His preoccupation with such units as 42 months, 1260 days, 1,000 years, 144,000, A.D. 566, A.D. 570, A.D. 1826, A.D. 1830 provided some speculative exercise but failed to unlock the mystery still hidden in the book. Unfortunately, too, Njeim resurrected the equation often used in earlier Latter Day Saint writings which reads: A.D. 570 + 1,260 days (years) = A.D. 1830.

While I commend the author for his imaginative and interpretive treatment of the Book of Revelation, still I cannot but regret that he does so at the price of scholarship. Despite the fact that most New Testament scholars admit that much of the book is uninterpretable, this author acknowledges only passing difficulty, and wades through with a mass of uncorroborated and indefensible data providing little or no evidence for his position.

The author of **Insights Into the Book of Revelation** may well be skilled in out-guessing the author of the Apocalypse. But at best it is only a guess. There is little new evidence in his book that in any way changes or challenges the findings of most New Testament scholars. Only God knows what the bulk of the Book of Revelation really means, and Njeim has not succeeded in lifting the veil to any appreciable extent.

Lorne F. White

The Book of Mormon: An Account Written By the Hand of Mormon, Upon Plates Taken From the Plates of Nephi. By Joseph Smith, Junior, author and proprietor. (Palmyra: E. B. Grandin, 1830, 578 pp.) Herald Heritage Reprint by Herald Publishing House, Independence, Missouri, 1970, $8.95.

This book is an attempt to reproduce faithfully the first (1830) edition of the **Book of Mormon.** The pages are photographically reproduced. Each page is as it appeared in the original edition. The testimony of the three and the eight witnesses is placed at the back of the book, just as was done in the original. The cover is designed to look like the original cover.

Except for the fact that the book cannot be made to show the physical signs of age and deterioration, the only evidence that it is not the original is the notation at the bottom of the back side of the title page: "Herald Heritage Reprint, 1970." While one can appreciate the desire to make it as much like the original book as possible, it seems to this reviewer that a little more explanation by the current editors would have been in order. A short explanatory paragraph following the "Herald Heritage Reprint, 1970" notation should give the publisher and place of this reprint, and the name of the church which Herald Publishing House serves. The person who reads a copy of this book many years from now will have a difficult time discovering who is responsible for this reprint. Who could be expected to know that

"Herald Heritage Reprint" means "Herald Publishing House, Independence, Missouri"?

In addition, a few words about the circumstances behind the 1830 publication, as well as the reason for it being reprinted in 1970, would have been helpful. Better still, the editors could have written a brief introduction to the **Book of Mormon**. If they didn't want introductory analysis obscuring the 1830 appearance of this book, they could have minimized this by placing the explanatory material at the back of the book, using modern type, and having the author sign and date his introductory article, which would clearly set it off as something added to the original.

It seems to this reviewer that this book could well have been marketed in non-Mormon markets if an explanatory article had been added, or at least a brief explanatory paragraph. More and more students of American religious history are studying Mormonism these days. Many non-Mormon readers would need the explanatory material. As it stands, he will only be baffled by the inadequate notation of the actual 1970 publisher.

Nevertheless, the publication of this book is very welcome. Scholars of Mormonism should be happy to have it in their libraries. This will make a good companion piece to Richard Howard's **Restoration Scriptures** (reviewed in the pilot issue of **Courage**, April, 1970, pp. 59-60). In that book Mr. Howard indicated that the **Book of Mormon** text has undergone revision. Students of the **Book of Mormon** will be able to read the original and make comparisons.

William D. Russell

Fire and Blackstone. Sermons by John Fry. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1969, 248 pp., paper, $1.95.)

This book has three commending ingredients. First, it provides a background of information concerning the involvement of the First Presbyterian Church, of which author Fry is pastor, in the life and hard times of the Chicago Southside ghetto and specifically the Blackstone Rangers. Second, it provides a theological context out of which such work is seen not only as appropriate but demanded. And third, it provides the sermons themselves.

The most publicized element of First Church's involvement concerns the Blackstone Rangers. Of this involvement John Fry testifies: "I used my first weeks in the city to have a look at the immediate parish. I walked up and down the streets and alleys of Woodlawn, talking to citizens, just getting the feel of the place. My eyes were stunned by what was coming at me. The name of the place should be Blackstone Rangers and not Woodlawn." The signs, visible and invisible, indicated that the Rangers were both highly respected and highly feared. The youth emulated them. The adults feared them. Fry, after this initial survey concluded: "Something had to be done."

Before any defined involvement had been developed, however, seventy-five Rangers were arrested on disorderly conduct charges arising out of a meeting of some twenty of them in a schoolyard. Some of the arrests were made seventy-two hours

after the meeting and some were made despite ironclad alibis — such as being at work. The Session of First Church voted bail bonds for all seventy-five. Such is the stuff of real concern and involvement. Of course, from that point on, according to Fry, there was no turning back. The Rangers had a new friend.

But First Church's involvement extends beyond its Ranger ministries. They developed a Head Start Program. And when, in the process of setting this up, they discovered that many children were "excluded" from school for highly spurious reasons, they set up an Excluded Children's program designed to redirect these children into public schools. Because much of the Southside area suffered politically due to the entrenched machine, the congregation created a Political Action Colloquium "for the purpose of doing independent political work in the Woodlawn precincts located near the church." The church also played a key role in initiating the procedures which led to the creation of the Woodlawn Organization.

Of this involvement, Fry comments that these were "discrete activities." "No theological rationale was necessary in order to justify them. That they had to be done was enough justification." And Fry is quick to point out that each of these initial involvements led to much deeper relationships.

Fry articulates his theological support for such involvement in the opening chapter of Part IV, "The Church and Blackstone."

First, Fry adduces that violence is inevitably the child of violence. The Rangers, he asserts, "feel that violence has been practiced upon them from birth," by parents, then by teachers and counsellors, then by police, and then by the silently complicit power structure of city, state and church. He reminds that "violence began with Cain and bears his mark. The moderation of violence is directly tied to forgiveness and not to categorical judgment; is bound to acceptance and not rejection. It would seem that we would some day admit in public what we all know so clearly in private. Violence ends when it is no longer produced."

Second, he suggests the principle of identification. First Church identified itself with the Blackstone Rangers. "These poor young men," he writes, "do not believe that life must be and is going to continue to be the way it is right now. As a church we share their belief. Hence our identification."

The principle of representation comes next. By this he means that the church **presents** itself **anew** to a specific group. It **represents** itself. By the same token, in the relationship that group represents itself to the church. The Blackstone Rangers, for example, directly represent the Woodlawn area. They represent it in terms of poverty, of bewilderment, of harassment, and of political impotence. By the same token, the church "in its just sittingness" represents white power — or the whole structure of white America. First Church, then, has sought to present anew, to the residents of Woodlawn and the Blackstone Rangers, "the specific reality of the Christian faith." Reciprocally, the Blackstone Rangers have sought to present themselves anew — as human beings trying to live in an unhuman situation.

In his fourth and last theological rationale, Fry proclaims the necessity to uphold "the humanity of black human beings and commit ourselves absolutely to the integrity of this humanity." For First Church, this means the Blackstone Rangers.

The final compelling imperative for

reading the book is the sermons themselves. Fry calls them non-sermons. He asserts:

> The new terms of greatness come from action in response to these issues, not because of brilliant preaching. In fact, great preaching — in that fine old three-solid-points-and-lots-of-stories-tradition — to a white-power bunch becomes anti-great, as well as grotesque. Aspiring to great preaching in that same white-power situation is ridiculous. The greater the words, the more greatly they mock preacher and hearers alike if they do not well up from within a situation of action. The time for great preaching of great sermons to great churches is over . . . a new age of preaching has dawned which sees — properly, I think — that the life of the congregation validates preaching and not the other way around.

Fry leaves the reader with little alternative. The sermons must be read, the book must be read, the style of the congregation must be contemplated, eventually emulated.

A comparison between the annual budgets of an anonymous RLDS congregation with that of Chicago's First Presbyterian Church measures, however, the enormous proportions of that task. Fry's church has a membership of 585. The RLDS congregation in mind has a membership of 650. First Church raises an annual budget of $85,000. This RLDS congregation had a 1970 budget in the neighborhood of $26,000. But this initial comparison needs to go further. The $85,000 First Church budget merely serves as a seed money for the more than $420,000 annually received from grants, loans, bequests, and government programs that is needed to fund their five-fold approach to community involvement.

Traditionally, RLDS have begun with setting a budgetary figure and then worked out programs within that figure. Chicago's First Church, if we are to believe its pastor John Fry, seeks involvement first, then tries to raise the money it needs to support the extending tenacles of that initial involvement.

This is a pattern worthy of deep consideration.

Joseph H. Pearson

Lorne F. White is on the staff at Graceland College; William D. Russell is an associate professor of religion at Graceland; Joseph H. Pearson is Acting Director of Campus Ministry for the RLDS Church.

LETTERS

To the editors:

Count me among the subscribers to **Courage**. I believe deeply in the essence of what you are doing and regret as deeply that, for whatever reason, the institution is unable to sponsor open dialogue. "All truth" — as long as it comes in small, easily digestible bites.

L. O. Brockway

Ann Arbor, Michigan

To the Editors:

The pilot issue of **Courage** is a first rate beginning. It will take some doing to maintain an objective balance, but that is essential to the purposes expressed by your editorial committee. Otherwise the publication could degenerate from a vehicle for useful criticism into a juvenile competition in nay-saying. Any ass can bray, especially when fed only sour grapes. But genuinely **redemptive** burden-bearing is exhausting work and calls for a more balanced diet.

I hope the Samaritans who write for you won't divert all of their talent to the denouncing of Priests and Levites while those falling among today's thieves continue dying in the ditch.

John W. Bradley

Salt Lake City, Utah

To the Editors:

I have just finished reading your first copy of **Courage** and am so delighted with it that I am enclosing my check for one year's subscription.

It is my opinion that we have been needing such a magazine for a long time. The article by Donald Landon is a masterpiece. Many others were outstanding.

I feel sure that many members of the church will profit by this publication and therefore may the church be benefited.

Ray Whiting

Clinton, Missouri

To the Editors:

Thank you for taking the bull by the horns and doing what's been needed to be done for lo these many years. We are truly excited about the concept of **Courage** and looking forward to reading each issue. Your first issue has already provided a springboard for some lively, spirited local discussions. That, I am sure, is one of your objectives.

Michael G. Kelly

Minneapolis, Minnesota

To the Editors:

I enjoyed your pilot issue very much.

I have been familiar with two similar journals. One fell into the easy path of parroting the house organ, while the other degenerated into a cynical platform for dissidents. Both completely lost their effectiveness. If **Courage** can successfully escape these two traps, it will be a tremendous benefit to the church and to its subscribers.

Cecil R. Ettinger

Independence, Missouri

To the Editors:

I have read the first issue of *Courage*. What I can't understand is why anyone feels he must go back and spend time and effort to cull out all the questionable mean things or writings or thoughts about Joseph Smith and publish them to the world. His enemies have done enough of that through the years.

First comes Flanders writing a derogatory book, and now, you writing of all his failings and mistakes. Anyone knows that any human being makes mistakes and doesn't always do or say the things he should. But why dig it up and publish it?

I have always hoped and expected people to remember some of the good I have done after I pass on and protect my reputation if possible, rather than go back and shout abroad some of my failings, faults, or deeds that I really am not happy with. I thought our church people stood for upholding each other, helping each other in the art of living, and being what God wants us to be. Of course, no human being is perfect. We all know that. Why would we expect Joseph Smith to be perfect?

I just can't see, nor understand, our priesthood and others who enjoy or devote precious time to digging back and trying to find evidence of one's humanity — then publishing it. What good can come from it?

You mention "half-truths." What are you talking about? My mother always told us that half-truths were as bad as lies, or worse. I think you folks should be spending your time and efforts in trying to build rather than tear down one's reputation.

God saw enough good in Joseph Smith to use him to restore His church and the priesthood. In my judgment we should appreciate the "good" — understanding that he wasn't a perfect person like Jesus — but a human being like the rest of us. But I still don't think it kind, wise, or necessary to shout his imperfections. If God accepted him, we should.

Doris A. Frederick

Orlando, Florida

To the Editors:

I just got ahold of your pilot edition of last April. I was so interested that I read the entire copy at one sitting.

I can't resist making a few comments on Don Landon's lead article. He seemed to be saying that there is a conflict between what he termed the "truth ethic" and the "love ethic." I see no conflict here. I see the two as going hand in hand — and the truth as leading to the love or discipleship goal he mentioned. Discipleship doesn't come full blown; it must be developed. A firm foundation of "truth" seems to me to be the best basis on which to guide one's life toward this ideal.

I am in whole-hearted agreement with Mr. Landon that the search for truth should not be an end in itself — that we can't sit self righteously on our "truth" and expect people to come flocking to us. But, on the other hand, the special "light" that is entrusted to us in these latter days should not be "hidden under a bushel" or pushed aside to make our beliefs more "acceptable" to the world.

We must somehow combine our quest for truth with our faith and trust in God's spirit that we may grow into that love for all mankind that he calls discipleship. The search for truth is the first step.

Gwen B. Chapman

Redlands, California

The editorial committee welcomes letters responding to the contents of this and subsequent issues of Courage.

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